DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 211 266 RC 013 070

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Hatton, Caroline |
| TITLE | Western South Dakota's Country Schools. Country School Legacy: Humanities on the Frontier. |
| INSTITUTION | Mountain Plains Library Association, Silt, Colo. Country School Legacy Project. |
| SPONS AGENCY | National Endowment for the Humanities (NFAH), Washington, D.C. |
| PUB DATE | 81 |
| NOTE | 92p.; For related documents, see RC 013 047-058 and RC 013 071-084. Best copy available. |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC04 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Acculturation; *American Indian Education; American Indians; Community Centers; Community Schools; Cultural Background; Cultural Influences; Curriculum; *Educational History; Elementary Secondary Education; *One Teacher Schools; Oral History; Rural Education; *Rural Schools; School Buildings; School Community Relationship; *Small Schools; State History; Teacher Role |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Country School Legacy Project; Historic Sites; Sioux (Tribe); *South Dakota |

ABSTRACT

As part of an eight-state research effort to locate and preserve information related to country schools, this report examines western South Dakota's country schools as historic sites, country schools as community centers, teachers (their roles, rules, and restrictions), school curriculum, education for Sioux Indians, and country schools today. School records, periodicals, manuscripts, and oral histories provide facts and anecdotes such as: in 1935 there were 4,029 frame school buildings, 77 of stucco, 59 of brick, 18 of hollow tile, 13 of logs, 3 each of stone and concrete, and 2 of sod; 11:00 P.M. was the hour when both men and women teachers were expected to be home; state law required that there must be at least 7 pupils to constitute a school, but this rule was broken or changed because some schools had only 2 or 3 pupils; in 1894, 81.7% of the children in South Dakota were enrolled in school, while during the depression year of 1934, only 42.8% of the children were enrolled; because of the lack of pencils, paper, and books, memorization was an important part of education; today, 108 small rural schools are still operating in western South Dakota. (NEC)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED211266

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY:

## Humanities on the Frontier

## WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA'S COUNTRY SCHOOLS

by

Caroline Hatton

School Librarian
Edgemont Public Schools
Edgemont, South Dakota

1981

Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities

Sponsored by the Mountain Plains Library Association

RC018070

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Andrew Gulliford

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**Project Director:**
Andrew Gulliford
Colorado Mountain College/Silt Elementary School
Silt, Colorado

**Media Director:**
Randall Teeuwen
Photo America
Fort Collins, Colorado

**Exhibits Director:**
Berkeley Lobanov
Denver, Colorado

**Fiscal Agent:**
Joseph Edelen
I. D. Weeks Library
University of South Dakota
Vermillion, South Dakota

## COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY: HUMANITIES ON THE FRONTIER

The Mountain Plains Library Association is pleased to be involved in this project documenting the country school experience. Funding of this project from the National Endowment for the Humanities, cost sharing and other contributions enabled us all to work with the several state-based Humanities Committees as well as many other state and local libraries, agencies and interested citizens. We are deeply impressed not only by the enthusiasm for this work by all concerned but by the wealth of experience brought to bear in focusing attention on—and recapturing—this important part of history, and how we got here. This project seems to identify many of the roots and "character formation" of our social, political and economic institutions in the West.

Already the main Project objective seems to be met, stimulating library usage and increasing circulation of historical and humanities materials in this region. Public interest is rising in regional, state and local history. Oral history programs are increasing with greater public participation. The study of genealogy—and the search for this information—is causing much interest in consulting—and preserving—historical materials. What has been started here will not end with this project. The immediate results will tour the entire region and be available for any who wish the program, film, and exhibit. There will be more discussion of—and action on—the issues involving the humanities and public policies, past and present. The Mountain Plains Library Association is proud to be a partner in this work, the Country School Legacy, and its contribution to understanding humanities on the frontier.

Joseph J. Anderson
Nevada State Librarian
Past President
Mountain Plains Library Association

# COUNTRY SCHOOLS AS HISTORIC SITES

## COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY

Caroline Hatton

COUUTRY SCHOOLS AS HISTORIC SITES

White men did not enter western South Dakota in any great numbers until 1876 so the 1880's, 1890's and 1900's were frontier times in this area. The land west of the Missouri was opened up to homesteaders in 1904 and people came seeking free land and gave no thought to how impossible it would be to make a living by farming on the Great Plains. The early days were tough times for the first pioneers in western South Dakota and the hardships they endured are reflected in the schools of that era. Over and over one hears or reads about how hard everyone struggled to have a school and to get their children there to attend it.

When enough families had come into a locality to warrant the opening of a school, the district was organized and the schoolhouse built, or more likely, for the first years, an abandoned dugout, claim shack, or sod or log house was appropriated for a school until a regular school could be built. A board of directors was elected and education began. Often times, a community would establish a school by providing a building and a supply of fuel and the county furnished the teacher.

Esther Darling told of her first school, "A young lady of eighteen years walked across the prairie for two miles with two of her pupils to a new frame school building supplied by two of the three patrons so they could keep their children home instead of boarding them out....This was

in Carlin District No. 92 in Haakon County... Desks, books and supplies had been gathered from other schools in the large district and fitted into the little unpainted building..."[1]

Often the building they provided was not in very good condition. No sod building used then still exists although there are people who remember when one still stood in Lawrence county. Few old log buildings still stand unless they have been covered and look like a frame building now.

Some which did exist were the Bower school which was a log building with a dirt roof and the Bakersville school in what is now Custer State Park. John Colman spoke of the first school he attended, "I attended school in what was jokingly called Mud College, a log building with a plank roof covered with dirt, it was very warm and comfortable."[2] The first Harrison Flat schoolhouse was built by men of the community. They hauled logs from the Black Hills. "It was built with notches and holes for guns and during an Indian scare Elvira [Mohler] and the children went with other families to the schoolhouse for protection."[3]

The Cold Spring school in Custer county is one log school building which has been saved and has been put on the National Register. It was built in 1887 by the Bowman brothers and Johnny Raver, all of whom lived in the valley where it sits. It has been restored and lovingly preserved by the old people who went to school there. Most of them are too old now to cope with the problems of its upkeep but because of one man's devotion to his neighbors it is preserved. Don Reed and his wife, Gladys, spend several days a year building fence, organizing picnics and dinners, making

1. Esther Anderson Darling, Memoirs of South Dakota Retired Teachers, p.31.
2. John Coleman, Our Yesterdays, p. 120.
3. Joye Sherman, Our Yesterdays, p. 279.

sure the grass is cut and that the building is safe. It was falling down and the Forest Service whose land it is on wanted to pull it down, when the Reeds and their neighbors intervened and saved it.

Another historical log school in the Black Hills built at about the same time which has not been saved is the Glen Erin school on Hazelrodt road east of Custer. It is tumbling down. The Cold Spring schoolhouse has the typical high ceiling, windows on both sides and sits on quite a high foundation. The Glen Erin school was a typical early day log cabin with low roof, eaves probably not six feet from the ground, and a few small windows. It did not look much like a schoolhouse but must have been cozy and warmer in winter than the high-ceilinged Cold Spring school.

The Mountain school in Red Canyon school district was a log building which was taken down log by log and set up again on the Miller ranch nearby to be used as a machine shop. One of the teachers there, in his end-of-the-year report, answered the question, "How was the school ventilated?" by replying, "Windows and cracks." Not all log buildings were cozy and warm.

Sod buildings were warm but by necessity had small windows. Some dugouts were comfortable but some were not. Mr. Seppala, in talking about his boyhood north of Buffalo in Harding county, mentioned going to school in a dugout which was 14' x 16'. There was a Christmas program that winter and everybody came but he wonders now how they managed to accommodate everyone. Pearle Rietmann taught in a dugout in Meade county and remembered how uncomfortably cold it was. The children and she had to go to a nearby creek and pick up branches and twigs to burn. She said, "I don't think we were comfortable at anytime."[1]

1. Pearle Rietmann, Central Meade County Prairie Schools, p. 322.

"On lower French Creek, the community was somewhat isolated. The schoolhouse was located quite a distance from the homes of the students so several vacant houses took their turn as a schoolhouse. The old Bower log house was used for several terms, then the Art Hedlun house served its turn."[1]

Alta Currier said, "We moved to the homestead six miles southeast of Fairburn. Our school days were really an effort. My first school was in the George T. Wagner home on South Fork... The second year we had school in Lillian Kimball's homestead house."[2]

Many schools were started in claim shacks, little tar-paper-covered buildings with one window and a door, sometimes as small as 10' x 12'. They were not built to be permanent dwellings but were built for shelter for the year it took to prove up on one's homestead. Once the year was up and the land in possession, the homesteader often sold it to a nearby neighbor and left. His claim shack stood unattended. As families moved into the area or moved away, the population shifted frequently. Some schools moved from little claim shack to claim shack following the center of population. This went on in some places until the early 1920's.[3] It is not surprising that not many really old schoolhouses exist in the West River area.

Almost all of these buildings are gone now. As the country became more thickly settled and there was more money, they were replaced with frame buildings, uninsulated, high ceilinged, and hard to heat. Many

1. Our Yesterdays, p. 440.
2. Alta Currier, Our Yesterdays, p. 407.
3. Personal interview, Grace Libby

of them were unpainted to keep taxes down. Some were stuccoed to make them warmer and to avoid having to paint. The Burdock school in Fall River county was stuccoed and never painted. With the years it has turned exactly the color of the gumbo it sits on.

There was trouble sometimes about where to put more permanent schoolhouses. There was a pbroblem in 1917 about the location of the Soper school. The schoolhouse was about three miles from Watsons and less than two miles from Mann's ranch. The Watsons complained. In order to settle the matter fairly, Mr. Blaine, school board president. and Mr. Mann measured the distance from Mann's house to Watson's house. They tied a rag onto the rear wheel of a spring wagon and counted the revolutions. There were 2508 revolutions of the wheel which had a circumference of 11 feet, 10 inches. That made the distance 1798 rods when they had computed revolutions times circumference. 1798 rods equaled 5.6 miles. Halfway would be 2.8 miles from each. Mann and Blaine, members of the board, and other interested patrons met at the halfway point and chose a new location for the school on the S.W. corner, SW½ of SW¼ of sec. 2 Tn 5, SR 1 E. B. H. M., 2.96 miles from Watsons and 2.65 miles from Manns.[1] There it still sits today where the road makes a sharp turn past it. Its name was changed from the Soper school to the Lauzon school which it is still called.

The names of the schools shifted in early days almost as often as the buildings themselves. It was a community joke north of Buffalo in Harding county; they moved the schoolhouse so often they kept runners under it.

1. Elk Mountain School District, Clerk's Record Book.

South Dakota had state laws and regulations about all manner of things concerning schoolhouses. One State Board of Health regulation said that "the glass area of windows shall equal 1/5 of the floor area of the school room." Building plans for new school houses were to be submitted to the State Department of Public Instruction before construction began. In a report by the State Planning Board in 1937, it was reported that half of the common school districts had failed to comply with this regulation.

Another important ruling was about the amount of airspace per child. That was the reason for the high ceilings. A school was to have only a certain number of children and after that number was reached, the children living the closest to some other school had to be taken there instead of the one nearest their home. This did not happen very often in sparsely settled ranch country. One wonders if they really needed to worry, with the way the wind must have blown in around the windows.

In 1937, 19.5 per cent of the 4222 districts which reported, needed new buildings or additions. That was 824 buildings which were needed. At the same time, 3.8 per cent or 161 of the schools reported that they needed additions.

In a 1934-35 survey, the ages of the schoolhouses were as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 600 schoolhouses | less than 5 years old |
| 1800 schoolhouses | were 6-20 years old |
| 400 schoolhouses | were 21-25 years old |
| 300 schoolhouses | were 46 years or older |
| 20 schoolhouses | were 66-70 years old and still in service |

As the report says, "Even assuming that frame school buildings erected fifty years ago have been repaired and reconditioned in supposed keeping with the needs of school children, one may well raise the question whether or not the best of such structures are doing justice to the

physical well-being of the pupils"

In 1935 there were still in use two schools made of sod. There were thirteen made of logs, seventy seven made of stucco, three of stone, fifty nine of brick, three of concrete, eighteen of hollow tile. The greatest majority of all the schoolhouses were frame buildings--- 4029 of them.

The lighting of the school buildins was still primitive in 1934-35:

72.58 per cent had no artificial lighting
27.77 per cent had kerosene or gasoline lamps
1.64 per cent had electric lights

Water and plumbing were always problems for country schoolhouses and still are in western South Dakota. In 1934-35,

40 per cent had wells and cisterns
60 per cent hauled their water
81.8 per cent had drinking water in a water pail
7.6 per cent had a drinking fountain
90 per cent had water basins to wash in
80 per cent had outside toilets
18 per cent had inside chemical toilets
2 per cent had flush toilets

The author of the survey report stated emphatically, "that the outside toilet is always a potential danger to the health and morals of school children."[1]

Ventilation was achieved by using windows or trarsoms in 95.1 percent of the buildings (and by cracks and windows in the Mountain school.)

Almost every country school had the same arrangement. There was an entry of some sort, either built onto the main building or partitioned off from the main room inside. There the children hung their coats and left their overshoes and their lunch pails. It was generally

1. South Dakota State Planning Board. Elementary and Secondary Education in South Dakota, 1937, pp. 132-152.

unheated. In some larger, more elaborate schools there were separate cloakrooms.

All the country schools had outside toilet buildings, one for the girls and one for boys. Many schools had a stable in which to keep the horses while the pupils were in school and sometimes a coal shed. Many schools had a fence around the yard but just as many did not have a fence. There was playground equipment in most yards in later years but in early days children had to make their own games. The equipment consisted usually of swings and teeter-totters. Every school had a flag pole in later days, sometimes a wooden one, later a metal one. None of the pictures of really early schools show a flagpole.

If a school had a teacherage it was either built onto the back of the school building or was a separate building next to the schoolhouse. It was usually one room, heated by the same kind of heat as the schoolhouse.

Inside every school building was the big pot bellied or jacketed cast iron stove in the middle of the room, double desks for the pupils, or single desks fastened together in rows, a desk and chair for the teacher. One person told of going to a school in an old log house where the desks were made from orange crates by his father. Some old schools like the Cold Spring school had an eight inch raised platform in the end of the schoolhouse where the teacher's desk sat. There was a water pail and dipper and a wash basin on a narrow table somewhere in the back of the room. A modern improvement was the purchase of a crockery water cooler with a lid, and sometimes a spigot. There was a blackboard; either boards painted black, or a certain kind of black treated cloth

stretched over boards,or real slate. Up in front near the teacher's desk was a long recitation bench where a class went when it was their turn to read or recite. Generally there were some maps. A really well-equipped school would have a wooden case mounted on the wall above the blackboard which contained a whole set of maps which the teacher could pull down one by one as needed. Lighting was a kerosene lamp in most schoolhouses if there was any lighting. Some better equipped for evening use had two or three brackets for lamps along each side of the room. A well furnished school house always had a large picture of Washington and one of Lincoln.

Amy Jacobsen found that when she went to the schoolhouse where she was to teach near Newell in Butte county, "I found the door open and some cattle had visited there. Only six books were on the library shelf. Many improvements were needed. I asked the school board for the improvements I felt were necessary; paint the schoolhouse red with white trim, repair the door with lock and key, scrub and clean schoolroom, as well as the windows. They did all this and also brought a crock with a cover for the water and a dipper. I bought flowered cloth and made sash curtains for the windows. Roll curtains were also provided.

The pupils each brought his own cup and towel. These were hung on a hook on the wall near the water fountain. The pupils pasted their names under their own cup and towel. The pupils were to use the dipper to fill their cups. They brought fresh towels each week.

The school provided coal from the Slim Buttes; it was peat coal; logs were also provided for the year's supply."[1]

[1] Amy J. Jacobson, Memories of South Dakota Retired Teachers, p. 68.

The abandoned schoolhouses which are still standing today are generally in bad condition. Windows are broken, they need paint. Those which were sold and moved to nearby ranches are generally in pretty good shape structurally. They are used as granaries, shops or cattle sheds. Some have been preserved and kept up to serve as a community hall and a meeting place for 4-H meetings and community parties of various kinds. One serves as a fire hall for a rural volunteer fire department. At least three have been preserved in the West River area; one at Cold Spring, one at Buffalo and one at Old Town south of Midland. The furnishings of an old schoolhouse have been collected by the Custer County Historical Society and one room of their museum has been set up to look like an old country school.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY


Elk Mountain School District. Clerk's Record Book.

Memoirs of South Dakota Retired Teachers. South Dakota Retired Teachers Association, 1977.

Our Yesterdays. Hermosa, S. D.: Eastern Custer County Historical Society, 1970.

School Stories in Central and Eastern Meade County, South Dakota, 1889 to Reorganization. Stoneville, S. D.: Stoneville Steadies Extension Club, 1969.

South Dakota State Planning Board. Elementary and Secondary Education in South Dakota. Pierre, S. D.: State of South Dakota, 1937.

# COUNTRY SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY CENTERS

## Country School Legacy

Caroline Hatton

## COUNTRY SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY CENTERS

Most communities used their schoolhouse as a center for all the activities going on in the area. There were several reasons. First, it was in the center of the community and more easily accessible for all the people than a ranch house might be. Even though few of them were over 20' x 30', the schoolhouse was the largest building available. There seemed to be the feeling that the school belonged to all the people so they felt welcome there. It was a symbol of culture in a frontier community where there were few symbols of culture.

One of the most important community uses was that of serving as a meeting place for Sunday school and church. Mainly such services were non-denominational. Sometimes church services were held every other Sunday when a minister could come, sometimes once a month. Sunday school classes taught by local women and men were held every Sunday. Sometimes if the school was close enough to a little town, church services were held on Sunday afternoon or evening so a minister who had to preach at his own church at the regular time could come to services in the country later in the day.

"Sunday School at Lame Johnny gathered together Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Christian Scientists, Methodists, Baptists, and folks of any denomination who happened to be among us. We sang hymns, Hazel Howe played the organ, and had classes learning Bible verses and Bible

stories and getting our lessons from them."[1]

Often in the summer there were Sunday school picnics after church, at the schoolhouse if there was no shade close by; in a grove of trees along a creek or river if there was one.

The Cold Spring school has an old cemetery next to it, and was used as a church for many years.

"Mr. Young built a building for school on his ranch [in 1887]. A Mr. Williams drove from Deadwood to Fairburn [seventy miles] every two weeks to hold Sunday church services on the Young ranch."[2]

The Christmas program was one of the most important events that took place at the school. Not only were the children involved but in some places the adults of the community took part every year. The same people performed the same part annually in the acting out of the Christmas story. Young men were shepherds and others the Wise Men for four or five years or as long as they stayed in the community. There were poems and little playlets memorized, songs sung. In some places everyone in the community exchanged gifts at the schoolhouse at the Christmas program. Besides the gifts, there were oranges, candy and nuts for the children. There was a tree, of course. If they had candles on it, they were lit for just a moment or two with a man with a pail of water close by in case of fire. After the program there was coffee, and sandwiches, cakes, and pies brought by the families.

Mrs. Carrie Fey remembers when she first had electric Christmas tree lights on the school tree. They used direct current so the night

1. Verda Arnold, Our Yesterdays, p. 137.
2. Our Yesterdays, p. 361.

of the Christmas program her husband, Philip, brought the battery from their radio and connected it to the tree and for a few brief minutes they had a lighted tree. It was a most beautiful sight to children who had never seen Christmas lights before. It was lighted very briefly so it would not run down the radio battery.[1]

Mrs. Beryl Heckert remembers how the holidays were celebrated in Meade county at the Crowell school. "The Christmas party was the big event of the winter. Plans were started on Thanksgiving Day. For ten years a community Thanksgiving Day carry-in feast was held at our place. All the neighbors came... During the afternoon the people above and below school age exchanged names to exchange Christmas gifts. The school age pupils drew at school. Then the Saturday night after Thanksgiving there was a dance and box-social at school. The money was to buy candy, popcorn and apples so everyone had a gift and a treat at the big Christmas program the school put on. The program lasted as much as one and one half to two hours. Then came Santa in the same fur coat, with gifts and candy. The program was a headache to the teacher but a joy for the students and the parents. It was definitely a time of Peace and Good Will.[2]

In some schools having a Halloween party was a tradition. The school children would have a program of Halloween poems and pieces or a Halloween play. Then they would bob for apples and play games. Lunch would be served; everyone brought something. The whole community came to the program and took part in the fun.

1. Personal interview, Carrie Fey
2. Beryl Crowell Heckert, Central Meade County Prairie Schools, p. 370.

Spelling bees were a part of the winter entertainment in the days when there were no radios, no television and no way to get to town. This was adult recreation and if the children came they were strictly in the audience unless some older one was an extra good speller who could hold his own with the competition. The teacher pronounced the words and they got tougher and tougher as the evening progressed.

In 1881 when Rapid City was just a village, an article appeared in the Black Hills Journal that challenged the people of the town, "Believing that an entertaining as well as amusing evening might be spent by the people of our town in an orthographical contest, I, S. Pitts Wells, the schoolmaster hereby in behalf of the Rapid City school, challenge the people of this town or as many as wish to participate to meet said school in a spelling match...." [1]

In the words of the Journal, "The result of the spelling bee was Veni, Vidi but we didn't Vici worth a cent! In other words the Rapid City school got away with the town... The ease, grace, and rapidity with which the school thinned the ranks arrayed in opposition was beautiful and wonderful to behold.... Miss Tressler stumbled on the word, 'mortise' and victory was declared for the school... McGuffey's spelling book was used."[2]

Earlier yet, in 1878 the Journal wrote that library societies, debating and dramatic clubs should be organized for the passage of the long winter nights...Early in 1879 a lyceum was held where the people of the town met in order to entertain themselves... It held

1. Black Hills Journal, Jan 1, 1881,
2. Ibid, Jan. 8, 1881,

regular meetings during the winter and on one occasion, a debate was held on the question: "Resolved: that mankind would be benefited by making it unlawful to charge and collect interest". The affirmative won. At another time the question for debate was: "Is a man morally bound to obey a law which he believes to be wrong?"

Sometimes poetry was read; original poems by the people present, or classics from books of poetry. S. Pitts Wells, the schoolmaster, took part in these programs and in the debates.[1]

Mr. Seppala remembered the lively debates he attended as a boy on the prairie north of Buffalo in Harding county. Some of the homesteaders had been college men and the whole community would gather at the school to hear good debates about all kinds of current topics.

Some times school programs, except for the Christmas program, were put on to raise money to buy things for the school; encyclopedias, a crockery water container, playground equipment, a clock. After the program there would be a box social or a pie social. Everyone in the community took part. Verda Arnold told it best.

"Oh what thrilling fun! All women and girls, even little preschoolers, decorated boxes or baskets with crepe paper. Some turned out creations of real artistic beauty. But the food! Packed in those boxes on the big night was enough food for six people and only two were supposed to eat it. Now the fun (?) came when a certain young man or boy was known to be courting-- or just showing interest in-- a special girl. The men and boys were not supposed to know to whom any one box belonged. But

1. Black Hills Journal, Nov. 2, 1878.

of course, there were ways and ways of finding out. Especially when the young lady was willing. The fun part came when a young man (sometimes not so young) began to bid. The rest of the males took great delight in bidding against him to run the price as high as they thought he could afford and would go. More than once a box sold for $25. or $30. So that a big boy wouldn't have to eat with a too little girl the boxes were stacked in three different groups. Adults, girls, and little girls."[1]

Adults enjoyed them as much as the young folks did. Sometimes it was a pie social. There the pies were auctioned off. Coffee was served and the buyer ate the pie with the lady who had baked it. It was unknown for anyone there to go without pie. The buyers generously shared with anyone who didn't get a pie.

Sometimes a dance was held at the school. Desks were pushed back against the wall and piled up in the entry, out of the way. All of the family came and babies and sleepy little children were bedded down on the benches while the older folks danced. Music was played by anyone who knew how on whatever instrument they played— piano, violin, guitar, accordian. Usually there were two people playing, sometimes three, seldom more than three. Sometimes one person provided the music.

Every community had one citizen who could "call" square dances, usually an older man who had danced them in his youth and took on the chore as he got older. No pay was involved for either the muscians or the caller. Lunch was served at midnight. No charge for that either;

1. Verda Arnold, Our Yesterdays, p. 137.

everyone had contributed and there was always more than enough for everyone. Heavy drinking was no problem, even though the men might step out for a little nip. The dancing was the main thing and everyone participated, sometimes all night long. If young people heard of a dance fifteen or twenty miles away, four or five of them, girls and men, might come on horseback. After the dance they would ride home, getting there well after sun-up. Cold weather was no deterrent, either. They could go by team and wagon but that was slower. Sometimes they did, with hot rocks or hot sad irons at their feet under buffalo robes for warmth. And we criticize kids today for the crazy things they do!

Once in a while a wedding dance was held at the schoolhouse. Vena Schick said, "Our wedding dance was held at the Ayres School House. Fred had to furnish the music and he never got to dance with his bride all night."[1] Fred played the violin.

Beryl Heckert remembered the dances at the Crowell school when she was a child, "The school room was about 24' x 26' but it was large enough to have neighborhood dances. As soon as we were old enough to stay awake after 8:00 p.m. we started to learn to dance. The music was usually a violin, banjo, and guitar. Lunch was served at midnight. Usually it was cake, sandwiches, pickles and coffee."[2]

More staid affairs at the schoolhouse included Farmers' Union meetings, 4-H meetings, the annual school board meeting, township meet-

1. Vena Schick, Our Yesterdays, p. 425.
2. Beryl Heckert, Central Meade County Prairie Schools, p. 370.

ings. The school was often the polling place at election time. One school was a place of shelter during Indian scares which didn't happen often. Harrison Flat was near the Pine Ridge reservation and the log school there had been built with notches like a fort. When there was an Indian scare the neighbors gathered there until they got over their fright and went home. No Indians ever appeared.

The last big affair of the school year was the school picnic. Everyone came whether they had children in school or not. It was a potluck affair with lots of food and usually a ball game in the afternoon and more coffee and food late in the afternoon before everyone went home. There was talking and visiting and games for the little kids. Sometimes it was held at school but generally it was held where there were some trees, along a creek somewhere. It came to be a tradition to go back to the same place year after year. The only thing that would cancel it would be rain for then the gumbo would be so sticky that wagon wheels couldn't turn.

Esther Darling found when she went to teach at the Stamford school that it was the center of community activity. She had not experienced that before and, as the teacher, found it took some adjusting to.

"Here, school or the schoolhouse was the center for all community activities including school, Sunday school, church, farmers' union, and community dances. School programs for the whole community were a must for Halloween and Christmas. Because the school was used for so many community activities, a special effort was needed to have things in order for other's use. This putting things back in order was quite

well respected by others using the building."[1]

Many people grew up with the schoolhouse the center of their lives. Everything important took place there. As children they attended school, as young people it was the place for social events, as married folks it was a place for cultural activities, church and Sunday school, and the best school they could afford for their children. In the days when twenty miles was a long day's drive, most homesteaders in western South Dakota were isolated from the rest of the world. The more isolated the community, the more important the schoolhouse was.

1. Esther Darling, Memoirs of South Dakota Retired Teachers, p. 31.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Black Hills Journal, November, 1878.

Black Hills Journal, January, 1881.

Memoirs of South Dakota Retired Teachers. South Dakota Retired Teachers Association, 1977.

Our Yesterdays. Hermosa, S. D.: Eastern Custer County Historical

School Stories in Central and Eastern Meade County, South Dakota, 1889 to Reorganization. Stoneville, S. D.: Stoneville Steadies Extension Club, 1969.

TEACHERS: THEIR ROLES, RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

COuntry School Legacy

Caroline Hatton

Booklet
p. 1/2

p. 4 definitely use ⟩ ℵ in Cab.
p8 not hire married teachers
p12 use

## TEACHERS: THEIR ROLES, RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

Who were the teachers in the country schools? From the earliest days and into the present time they were and still are ranchers' wives and ranchers' daughters. In early times there were eastern girls from Iowa and Minnesota, and more eastern states, too, who came out west to be teachers. They were hired before they left home, sight unseen, and surely most of them did not know what they were getting into. Some wanted adventure, which they had. Some wanted a man, which they surely found. Teachers rarely lasted more than a year or two before being proposed to by some cowboy or two or three.

"In 1918 Miss Marie Sawyer came to be teacher at Lame Johnny school. She started school with us again the next year but during the Christmas vacation she and Henry Sieger were married.

In 1920 Oleanna Larsen was teacher at Lame Johnny. One day during Miss Larsen's term, Carty Ash of Oral came to visit---school? Well, he came to visit anyway. There was a slightly flustered teacher and a room full of very wise pupils with a few hushed giggles scattered around. Before the next school year, Oleanna Larsen and Carty Ash were married. That meant a new teacher for 1921-22."[1]

Johnson Downen was a young man whose family bailed (sp) hay for a living. Maude Metcalf, a young schoolteacher, came to live with his parents and taught school nearby. It was during this year that a lasting romance developed. Maude's next year was spent with the

1. Verda Arnold, Our yesterdays, p. 140-41.

Gregerson family and she taught school at the Summit school. During her third year of teaching she and Johnson were married at Christmas time."[1]

The role of the teacher in the community was an important one. People attached much importance to education and wanted it for their children. So the person to whom they entrusted their children to get education was an important one. She was a cultural leader in the community. There was an interest in everything she did or said or wore, especially if she were a stranger. Those that lived in the community came to become a kind of community fixture. She was important to the whole community, not just to the children in school.

At school she was janitor, superintendent, principal, playground supervisor, office girl, producer and director of programs, and organizer of community picnics and social events.

A few men taught in country schools. In the Custer County Superintendent's Register of School Officers (school board members) for the years from 1891 to 1919, there were about four women for every one hundred male officers listed. At least 90 per cent of the teachers which were supervised and managed by these men were women.

As the times worsened during the depression more young men taught because other jobs were so scarce but never were they more than a small minority.

School board members, during the early days and in the depression, out of desperation to find a teacher for their kids, did not worry

1. Our yesterdays, p. 388.

too much about qualifications. "At Lame Johnny the teacher quit at Christmas. One day a Mr. Harry McDonald came to Buffalo Gap looking for work. How did he get in touch with Father? And why did Father ask if he could teach school? There is no one now who can answer these questions. Lame Johnny needed a teacher; Mr. McDonald made application and was accepted. Probably without any questions asked. He was a good teacher in one way. He was able to explain and make us want to learn. He was a good disciplinarian and we all adored him. But this was too good to last. Mr. McDonald was wanted by the law. The details are vague and how he found out the 'law' was so close is anyone's guess. He just disappeared and school was over for the rest of that year. No picnic, no program-- just nothing. No one ever heard if he paid for his folly."[1]

There were restrictions in some small communities that must have made a teacher's personal life difficult. Helen Greenfield wrote in her memoirs, "You have heard of curfew for students. Have you ever heard of curfew for teachers? Eleven o'clock was the hour when teachers were expected to be home in the small South Dakota town where I started my teaching career. This was known as 'teachers' curfew' and it applied to men as well as women. It was a rule to be observed by everyone who planned events where teachers were expected to attend. No teacher tried to sneak in after curfew. If an individual thought of such a thing, he gave up the idea as impossible because his landlady surely would know of his misdemeanor.

In those days a teacher lived in a rented room, usually an upstairs bedroom, in a private home. Only the superintendent, the

1. Verda Arnold, Our yesterdays, p.140.

coach and possibly one or two other married faculty members had apartments or homes of their own. When single men or women came to town to teach, each rented a room in a private home. It was unthinkable for a couple of young women to live in an apartment where they could entertain as they pleased.

Good

Living in a single bedroom was not one of the specified rules; it was an economic necessity.... Such restrictions left little room for freedom. One did not take the liberty of entertaining friends nor undertaking any noisy activity in someone else's private home. The room was simply a place to retire after a day's work at school."[1]

More important than any social restrictions were the living conditions which a teacher in the country had to endure when she boarded with some families. One teacher wrote, "My bedroom was an unfinished attic room with an outside stairway which at times was slick with ice and snow. Before going to bed, the room was heated with a small wood and coal stove; we used a kerosene lamp. I kept my clothes under the covers so they would be warm in the morning; sometimes my bed was covered with snow. I would go downstairs to wash, eat breakfast, take my school bag and lunch pail to start walking 1½ miles to school."[2] For this she probably paid ten, twelve or fifteen dollars a month.

Use

A surprising number of teachers have said that they preferred to stay at the schoolhouse rather than with some patron. It was inconvenient in many ways, but it insured a certain amount of privacy and peace and quiet. During the winter, if one boarded with a

1. Helen Greenfield, Memoirs of South Dakota retired teachers, p. 51.
2. Julia Hall, Memoirs of South Dakota retired teachers, p. 70.

family with children, it meant eating all meals with the children, teaching them all day, spending the evening with them, and probably sharing a room with one or more of them. In the winter the bedrooms were cold so one could not retreat there but must spend the evening near the stove with the whole family.

To live comfortably in the schoolhouse the teacher would have a kerosene stove in a cloakroom and a fold-up cot to put down in the schoolroom. She would live out of a suitcase. There was no plumbing so the toilets were outside but so it was at her home, too. She ate at her desk and used a kerosene lamp for correcting papers or sewing in the evening. No telephone, no radio, and the nearest neighbor a mile or more over the hill. Her husband took her the fifteen miles to school on Monday morning, or Sunday evening if the roads or weather were bad, and came after her on Friday afternoon. His life on the ranch by himself was even lonelier than hers; at least she had the school children every day.

Some even kept a child with them at the schoolhouse if the child's ranch home was too far from school for the trip to be made every day. One lady wrote, "Another year I stayed in a one room teacherage. I kept a little boy with me during the five days; we curtained off a corner of the classroom for his little bedroom."[1]

There were a few teacherages. Sometimes it was a room built directly onto the side or back of the schoolhouse. Sometimes it was a separate building. Teacherages usually had the same facilities as the schoolhouse. If the schoolhouse had a wood or coal stove,

1. Julia Hall, Memoirs of South Dakota retired teachers, p. 70.

so did the teacherage. If the school had no water, neither did the teacherage. If gas or kerosene lamps were used in the schoolhouse the teacher had a gas or kerosene lamp at the teacherage.

Why did teachers stay at the teacherage or at the schoolhouse when they lived only fifteen miles away? Probably they had only one vehicle and her husband needed it. Bringing her in the morning and coming after her at night interfered with chores and milking, things that needed to be done before dark, especially in winter in those days before rural electrification. Besides it was too expensive in the depression to travel that thirty miles every day. The country raod which was the closest route was only a trail across the prairie, little traveled,and in winter, before the days of four-wheel drive vehicles, likely to be impassable. To go around on better and more traveled roads was twice as long a trip.

Quite often traveling to school meant a long walk. One lady remembered... "I would take my school bag and lunch pail to start across the prairie walking the 1½ miles on a cold winter day through deep snow with no fence nor guide to follow. This was dangerous when road tracks were covered with new snow and blizzard conditions were beginning to arise. The two little boys from this home walked with me, which made it a difficult problem in the cold. To get the fire started, the room warm and try to wipe away the frozen tears with the cold fingers."[1]

Lucille Hartshorn recallled her school days when her aunt, Jennie Buen, was her teacher. "In the early fall they [Lucille and Jennie] traveled the seven miles with a horse and buggy. Ray's homestead

1. Julia Hall, Memoirs of South Dakota retired teachers, p. 70.

shack was refinished, inside and out, and moved down just east of the school yard, for Jennie and Lucille to live in from Monday through Friday. In the spring of 1927 a blizzard and extremely heavy snowfall created travel problems for several weeks---first the snow drifts and then the flood waters. They rode horseback and carried the week's supply of food, clothing, etc. with them."[1]

The building where a teacher worked was cold in winter and extremely hot in the fall and late spring. The stove had to be coaxed along. The fire had to be started each morning and on very cold mornings, the schoolroom would not warm up until noon. One elderly lady told how one winter one of the mothers came to school with her child and spent most school days at school, sewing or doing needlework. Sometimes she helped students or listened to them read. She was a well educated lady who was having hard times and the teacher made her welcome for she suspected there was no money to buy coal for the stove at home.

Supplies and books were adequate but limited. There was a blackboard, a recitation desk, double desks for the children, and later, single desks fastened together in a row, a teacher's desk and chair, maps, sometimes a globe, sometimes a piano or an organ, always a water pail and dipper. Later, a new innovation was a crockery water cooler with a lid. Some schools had wells, some had cisterns, at some the children and the teacher carried their water to school in covered syrup pails.

---

1. Lucille Hartshorn, Our yesterdays, p. 314.

In the late 1880's and early 1900's salaries were low. After the First World War they increased and were their best in the 1920's. When the depression came, they went down. Examples are: Floyd Cocking: First grade certificate from Aberdeen Normal School; $110 per month; highest paid graduate out that year; the job teaching fifth to eighth grades at Pringle in the Black Hills.[1] Zelma Sweeney:"I taught one year at the Bender school on Squaw Creek, 1903-04...My salary was $30. a month and I paid $10. a month for room and board."[2] Sylvia Warren: "[During the depression] finally a contract came from a school east of Hermosa at $75. a month. I paid $20. for room and board. The next two years I taught at the Lame Johnny school and received $50. a month [and lived at home]."[3]

From the record book of the Directors of the Harrison school township comes the following: "August 13, 1889. At a meeting held this day..... the scale of teacher's salaries shall be as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| First grade certificate | $40.-45 per month |
| Second grade certificate | $35.-40 per month |
| Third grade certificate | $30 per month |

In the 1930's the pinch of the depression manifested itself by the petition presented to the Harrison School Board asking them not to hire married teachers. "It was then moved, seconded and carried not to hire any married woman who has an able bodied husband."[4] This rule presisted in many places until World War II and the shortage of teachers then.

1. Lloyd Cocking, Memoirs of South Dakota retired teachers, p. 26.
2. Zelma Sweeney, Our yesterdays, p. 263.
3. Sylvia Warren, Our yesterdays, p. 275.
4. John Barta, Our yesterdays, p. 334.

Vena Schick wrote, "I boarded schoolteachers through the years. Cora Havens got $60. a month and I charged her $15 a month for her board."[1]

A teacher was supposed to have a certificate before she could teach. The first certification law was written in 1862. It stated that the county superintendent was to examine all teachers who offered themselves for service, in moral character, learning, and ability to teach. Certificates were limited to one year.

In 1879 provisions were made for the Superintendent of Public Instruction to prescribe the requirements for first, second, and third grade certificates.[2] To become certified, anyone could take the tests given annually by the County Superintendent. One's grades on the various parts determined the kind of certificate one received. Tests were given in reading, writing, geography, grammar, spelling, arithmetic, United States history, civics, physiology, bookkeeping, current events, art, and theory and practice. Low scores meant one could be rejected. The Record Book for the Superintendent of Schools for Custer County from 1892 to 1919 contained a section labeled Rejected and it was a long list of people who had taken the tests and failed.

Eventually by studying one could pass the tests with high enough scores to get a first grade certificate and not have to take the tests again. In the middle 1920's as more and more teachers began to attend normal schools, their attendance there gave them a third, second or first grade certificate without having to take the tests.

1. Vena Schick, Our yesterdays, p. 425.
2. G. Justin Bales, "Development of territorial education of the Black Hills of South Dakota, 1876-1890" (unpublished thesis), p. 39.

By then, renewals were possible without taking the tests again. By the early 1930's few were taking the tests. 1934 was the date of the last recorded test scores in Custer county. All certificates were issued for attendance at normal school or college after that.

In the early 1900's many high schools offered "normal"courses which prepared their students to teach. One part of those courses consisted of Senior reviews, in which they went over or reviewed all areas of knowledge; math, spelling, history, geography; all the areas they were likely to encounter when they took the teacher examinations. Young men and women as young as 16 started to teach with a third grade certificate. If they studied diligently, or learned as they taught various subjects, when they took the test the next year, they might advance to a second grade certificate. A first grade certificate was difficult to attain and usually required some teaching experience and one or two years at a normal school.

It was difficult to find the money to attend school, especially during the depression. Many went to summer school and taught in the winter.

Qualification standards remained low for elementary teachers in South Dakota into the 1950's. In a Report of the Committee on Education of the South Dakota Legislative Research Council in 1954, the committee was concerned with the problem of teacher certification. In the 1953-54 school year there were 212 "unqualified" teachers and 1215 permit teachers employed. To have a permit meant that one had less than one year of normal training; it could be as little as six

weeks of summer school. At that time no other state ranked lower than South Dakota in the percentage of teachers who are college graduates. In South Dakota only ten per cent of the elementary teachers were college graduates. The highest at that time was Arizona where 97.5 per cent of elementary teachers had degrees.[1]

To overcome the lack of good education and teacher training among elementary teachers county institutes were held every year at the county seat in every South Dakota county. Recorded in the Record Book of the Superintendent of Schools for Custer County was the first institute held there from July 20, to August 1, 1891. It lasted for ten days and was conducted by Mr. R. M. Jester. In 1894, fifty-five teachers attended and in 1902, Professor G. W. Nash conducted classes for 96 teachers. There were lessons on how to teach, classes to provide information about various subjects such as geography and travel, demonstrations in art and handicraft. It was a time for all these young women who led such quiet, hard working lives in the rural schools to get together in town for a few days. In the evenings, one lady remembers, they would go back to the meeting place and spend the evening copying new patterns to use during the school year. Mr. Leo Seppala, who lived in Buffalo as a young man, remembered institute as a time when all the young ladies of the county would be in town and special programs would be held and would be open to the public as well as to the teachers. But the young ladies were the main attraction.

Ha!

Yes!

1. South Dakota Legislative Research Council, Report of the Committee on Education, 1954, p. 6.

These young ladies knew they had much to learn. Mrs. Carrie Conger said she was so inexperienced it was a wonder the pupils learned anything. But looking back, it seemed to one of her former pupils she did well in spite of her inexperience, and taught eighteen or twenty pupils in all eight grades.[1]

The teacher was the key factor. Inexperienced, untrained, but conscientious and hard-working, the girls of sixteen and seventeen and older who were the early rural teachers did more than they ever knew to bring culture to the frontier that was western South Dakota.

1. Verda Arnold, Our yesterdays, p. 136.

## Bibliography

Bales, G. Justin. "Development of territorial education of the Black Hills of South Dakota, 1876-1890" (unpublished thesis),1943.

Custer County Superintendent of Schools. Record Book, 1891-1973.

Memoirs of South Dakota retired teachers. South Dakota Retired Teachers Association, 1977.

Our Yesterdays. Hermosa, S. D.: Eastern Custer County Historical Society, 1970.

South Dakota Legislative Research Council. Report of the Committee on Education, 1954.

READING, WRITING, 'RITHMETIC AND RECITATION

Country School Legacy

Caroline Hatton

p14 "Rally days"

Booklet
p8
p9
p10-11 8th grade exams

## READING, WRITING, 'RITHMETIC AND RECITATION

As settlers came to South Dakota from the 1880's until World War I, one of the first things they did was to organize a school. The first homesteaders east of Oelrichs built their own school, furnished it and hired a teacher several years before an official school district was formed. When it was, they turned their school over to the proper authorities.[1] These homesteaders knew all about how to set up and run a school. Many of them were middle-aged family men who had been board members in the states they had come from so they knew how to get schools started, even though the building might be crude and, at first, lack the kind of equipment they had known back east.

This same development took place everywhere as districts came into existence. The state law said there must be at least seven pupils to constitute a school. Once the districts were formed this rule was broken or changed because some schools had only two or three pupils sometimes.

In 1862 the first territorial legislature had made a legal provision for the district unit of school control. At the beginning the district officers were director, clerk, and treasurer, each elected for one year. There was an annual meeting of electors in these early days, where the whole community considered the levy of a school tax, the location of the school building and the length of the school year which was not to be less than three months.[2]

1. Personal interview, Carrie Fey
2. G. Justin Bale, "Development of territorial education of the Black Hills of South Dakota (unpublished thesis), 1943.

Marie Patterson says of her first school in Meade County, "Our building was my fourteen by sixteen shack and the class was eleven children who came in assorted sizes. We did not have desks in rigid rows bolted to the floor. In fact, we did not have desks, just a few tables and chairs. The McCoy, the Wilcox, the Ham, and the Hertz children attended this learning center for three months in the fall and three months in the spring when they were not otherwise occupied."[1]

Pearle Rietmann said of her teaching career in Meade county, "When I first started teaching about 1918 there were no organized schools as such, therefore I had to get out and hustle up the seven pupils required by law before a school could be started. There were few children at that time but I managed to get enough signed to start school.

The school house was an abandoned claim shack, no equipment whatsoever, but we managed by supplying our own, a few chairs, a couple small tables, a board painted black answered for a blackboard. We had no books or writing material except what we brought from home. Fortunately these children were all small so it wasn't hard to teach them to read, write, spell and do simple problems. However the school was only a short term as two families moved away leaving only two children.

The next school was also a short three month term. The owner had proved up on his claim and left. It was in a dugout, the house partly built into the side of a hill about seven miles from home. Mrs. John Magnuson cleaned the place up as best she could the day before school started. Two of her children, Amelia and Herbert, were my pupils... It

1. Central Meade County prairie schools, p. 313.

was a cold winter, there was no fuel supplied, the children and I had to pick up twigs and branches from a nearby creek to burn in the tiny stove. I don't think we were comfortable at any time."[1]

Irene Griffin said, "The one room unpainted schoolhouse was too hot if your desk was next to the stove, but you were cold if your seat was near the wall. During cold weather your feet were always cold. I don't believe children were as intelligent as they are now. Perhaps, some had plenty of potential but they had little guidance and not much to stimulate interest."[2]

Evelyn Howe said, "On chilly winter mornings we huddled around the wood stove to warm ourselves, then attended to thawing out the water pail and ink bottles."[3]

In 1893-94 the average term of South Dakota schools was 113 days or about 5½ months. This was twenty-two days less than the national average had been in 1889. By the 1913-14 term the average school term for South Dakota was 154, only four days less than the average for the nation. In 1929-30 the average was 172.7 days but in 1933-34, due to the hard times of the depression it had gone down to 171 days.[4]

Around 1889 the school term for the Harrison Flat school ran usually for four months beginning about October 1. By 1910 the term was divided into two sessions of three months in the fall and three in the spring.[5]

The clerk's record for the Elk Mountain school district for July 14, 1914 shows that the board decided to have eight months of school at the Dewey school, six months school at Elk Mountain school and three months

1. Central Meade County prairie schools, p. 322.
2. Irene Griffin, Our yesterdays, p. 445.
3. Evelyn Howe, Our Yesterdays, p. 253.
4. South Dakota State Planning Board, Elementary and secondary education in South Dakota, p. 2.
5. John Barta, Our yesterdays, p. 332.

school at the Soper school. In 1915 they chose to have eight months school at both the Dewey school and the Soper school and to have school at Elk Mountain for three to six months. In July of 1917 they allowed nine months school at Dewey, eight months school at Sopers and seven months school at Elk Mountain. There was no mention of the reason for the difference in lengths of term.[1]

Many older boys went to school only when the ranch work was done. Sometimes they were older than the teacher, almost always they were bigger then she. If they respected the teacher they helped keep the younger ones in line; otherwise they were a discipline problem.[2]

Ruth Elliott wrote about her father, Ben Miller, "When work was slow he went to school, as was frequently the custom then, work came anead of school....When he was seventeen years old he went back to school. He had left home when he was thirteen or fourteen years old and struck out for himself."[3]

In 1894, 81.7 per cent of the children in South Dakota were enrolled in school. Most of the population of South Dakota at that time was east of the river in small towns or on thickly populated farm land. Twenty years later, by 1914, the population had spread over the thinly settled western half. Times were tough for the settlers and it was difficult to have school when families lived so far from one another. Only 67.9 per cent of the children were enrolled. Times were better in the twenties but by 1934, the depression was felt everywhere and only 42.8 per cent of the children in South Dakota were enrolled in school. Children had to go to work to help support the family.[4]

1. Elk Mountain School District, Clark's record book.
2. Personal interview, Carrie Fey
3. Ruth Elliott, Our yesterdays, p. 222.
4. South Dakota State Planning Board, Elementary and secondary education in South Dakota, p. 18.

Over and over, the fact is mentioned that school books were furnished by the pupils. "They used whatever books they had. There was no uniformity in textbooks. Reading, writing and arithmetic was the curriculum."[1]

Julia Hall wrote, "In my early school days parents furnished textbooks. As a consequence there was often a lack. The only supplies furnished by the school board were chalk and erasers. Up till my last years in the grades I never saw a sheet of construction paper and I am quite sure all the other schools in my county were as unsupplied."[2]

The series of reading books called Blodgett's reader were popular. Other reading series were School reading by grades by Baldwin, the Swinton readers, the series called Progressive course in reading by Aldrich and Forbes, and the Heath readers by grades. Geographies included Natural school geography, edited especially for the Dakotas and Minnesota by Redway and Hinman, First steps in geography by Frye, and Barnes complete geography by Montieth. One history book was A primary history of the United States for intermediate classes by Donnelly. Golden song books were used for singing.

The noon meal was a break in the day's hard work. Once lunch was eaten, the children played games with the teacher usually playing with them. For these children so isolated on their ranches, this play time must have been very good for them and filled a real social need. Sometimes recess would be skipped so the whole school could take a longer noon hour and go to a nearby pond to skate or a hill to slide down.

There were no hot lunch programs in those days. Most lunches con-

1. Ruth Elliott, Our yesterdays, p. 222.
2. Julia Hall, Memoirs of South Dakota retired teachers, p. 52.

sisted of a jelly sandwich with an apple or a plain piece of cake or a cookie; no waxed paper wrappings in those days. Fried egg sandwiches were big, with homemade bread. Sometimes biscuits or cornbread were all some children had, with lard instead of butter. Times were tough and fruit was not available except in season.

In one community the five or six mothers took turns sending the ingredients for a hot dish which the teacher heated on a kerosene stove and all the children shared it. Often it was only plain potato soup; milk and potatoes were two things most people had plenty of, but sometimes it was dishes like vegetable soup or macaroni and cheese or hot cocoa. Another teacher said that such a plan did not work at all where she taught because the mothers kept trying to out-do one another in the hot dishes they sent and it caused so much friction and hard feeling they had to stop it. Somehow it's comforting to know that people haven't changed much and that our intrepid pioneer ancestors were human also.

Dorothy Harmon said, "...often our bread was frozen at noon, as we had to leave it [our lunches] in the ante-room. But there was a huge stove in the center of the room... We would toast our bread on top of the stove, and at least we had hot toast. The butter would melt and smoke... but Mrs. Van Pelt never said anything about it."[1]

School was very important and the children came to these often uncomfortable schoolhouses by whatever means they could get there. They walked, rode horseback, drove a horse and cart or horse and buggy, were brought in a wagon, or on a bobsled behind a team. Paul Schnose said, "We traveled the seven miles to school each day in a buckboard pulled

1. Dorothy Harmon, Our yesterdays, p. 246.

by two horses. The next year... Arthur rode a saddle horse and I rode a pinto Shetland pony, bareback."[1]

Marian O'Brien said, "We had to walk 2½ miles to school over country that was rough. We also had to cross two creeks, that in the spring of the year always overflowed. These and the draws were hard to cross and many times we would have to rely on the railroad bridge to cross Lame Johnny [Creek]."[2]

Dorothy Harmon remembered experiences with Lame Johnny Creek. "One time when I was about six years old Mr. John Hackel, who lived on the east side of the creek, hitched his team to the wagon to come to the schoolhouse to get all the children who lived on the east side of the creek as it was terribly high this time. When we got to the creek and started to cross, we didn't understand Mr. Hackel's seriousness but the wagon started going downstream and the horses were having a difficult time trying to keep going. The wagon was full of children but after what must have seemed a very long time to Mr. Hackel we finally got to the other side..."[3]

Zelma and Joe Norman drove 4½ miles to the Harrison Flat school in a one horse cart pulled by a faithful old horse called Inger which their dad had purchased from an Indian for a dead cow.[4]

Tom Norman, from the time he was seven until he was twelve, rode seven miles on horseback to the Grieves school. During inclement weather he stayed with a family who lived closer to school.[5] Horses were a big part of people's lives in those days. Mrs. Rietmann said that in 1925

1. Paul Schnose, Our yesterdays, p. 80.
2. Marian O'Brian, Our yesterdays, p. 169.
3. Dorothy Harmon, Our yesterdays, p. 246.
4. Josephine Hazzelstrom, Our yesterdays, p. 260.
5. Audrey Norman, Our yesterdays, p. 255.

when she taught at the Chaffee school in Meade county, most of the pupils rode to school, usually two to a horse. "In the spring there was a pond not too far from the schoolhouse and those youngsters would ride their horses out in the middle of it, turn them around end to end and make them kick at one another. What kids won't do!"[1]

In the northwestern part of South Dakota wild horses were a problem even to someone on horseback. Jennings Floden said that his father would not allow him to ride in one area even when he was seventeen because of the danger of meeting a wild stallion whose territory that was. E. C. Pellegrin told of wild horses coming up out of the breaks between his ranch home and the schoolhouse. "They were mean and would chase anything, so my dog usually went to school with me. One day when they were giving me a worse time than usual Sherm Strait came out and shot at them to keep them from me."[2]

The teachers at most of the schools were mostly young, inexperienced, and poorly trained. But most of them made up for their youth and inexperience and lack of training by hard work, ingenuity and conscientiousness. All were helped to get the practical information and teaching methods they needed by attending annual county institute which lasted a week or two at the county seat sometime during the summer.

And they had the South Dakota course of study to follow. If they followed it conscientiously, and had had a good enough education themselves, so they knew the content of the subjects they were expected to teach, they were successful teachers. The Course of study was the teacher's

1. Central Meade County prairie schools, p. 323.
2. Central Meade County prairie schools, p. 373.

Bible. She never prepared a lesson without consulting it. It listed every fact and every concept to be learned in every subject for every grade and gave ideas of what could be done to accomplish the learning of all of it. It was printed and published by the State of South Dakota and came from the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Grace Lobdell Hammerquist, retired teacher, described her first teaching experience at the Dawkins school: "The dozen children and I religiously covered the work for each month as it was outlined in the big yellow State Course of study."[1]

Floyd Cocking taught his first year at the Pringle school in Custer county. "One of my seventh grade girls was pretty sharp and I had to hustle to keep her busy and challenged. And then I found the solution. Two of my fifth grade seemed to need more personal help then I had time to give so I had Anne start helping them. Within a week, she was my full-fledged teacher aide during parts of the day. She loved it. So did I. And everyone profited from it. Of course, she did not get paid. But she got a better education.

It seems we were to teach about six or eight subjects to each grade level...That would make twenty-five or thirty classes a day during a period from eight till three. Could you believe our shortest class was only five minutes? That was spelling. And our longest was twenty minutes. That was because I believe in a good math background. Some other doubling up had to be done so I put the fifth and sixth grades together in the same class for history the first semester and covered the fifth grade work. The second semester we did the sixth grade work.

1. Grace Lobdell Hammerquist, Memoirs of South Dakota retired teachers, p. 54.

It was not too bad but did keep the teacher jumping without benefit of coffee breaks, free periods, relaxation or neighborly chats with other teachers.

We knew the subject material had to be covered from the Course of study, But the teacher was not the final authority. He had to do his job well enough so that everyone in the eighth grade was qualified to graduate. The county superintendent prepared the final exams, mailed them to the president of the school board who delivered them to the teacher the day of the final exam. After the student had written the examination, the papers were returned to the county office for marking. And if the grades were too low, the student flunked out and had to repeat another year. If a teacher had that happen, you can imagine how popular he was in the community. But the system seemed to encourage both the student and teacher to do a good job." [1]

Questions like this tested whether or not the Course of study had been followed:

> Grade VIII arithmetic: A man bought at a sale a team of horses for $375. The terms of the sale were, 1 year's time at 6% interest, or 2% off for cash. The man accepted the latter condition and went to a bank and borrowed just enough money to pay the cash amount paying 8% interest. Did he gain or lose by choosing the second condition, and how much?
>
> Grade VII spelling: Spell ten words to be pronounced by the teacher from a list made up by her from those words quite generally missed when the regular lessons were given, but which have since been studied.
>
> Grade VI reading: You will write from memory one stanza from either, "Barefoot Boy," "The Children's Hour", "Ode to a Waterfowl", or "Star Spangled Banner".

1. Floyd Cocking, Memoirs of South Dakota retired teachers, p. 27.

Grade V drawing: Each pupil will bring two potatoes. They will be placed on the desk in front so that the end of one overlaps the other. Draw them just as they seem.

Grade IV geography: Draw an outline map of South America and write the names of the oceans on the east and on the west of it.

Grade III geography: Write how you could make a little pool of water from water running in the street or road after a rain. If you have ever seen a lake on a stream of water, tell how you think it came there.

Grade II language: The teacher will have on the board a liberal list of words already studied having the long and short sounds of a, e, i, and o. She will have each come to the board and mark the vowels of four of them.

Grade I reading: Write on the board a few sentences such as the following and have each pupil read for fluency and expression: "Mamma, I see you. Do you see me? I love you Mamma. Do you love me?"[1]

Verda Arnold remembered taking the final eighth grade examination. "In the spring of 1922 a decree went out from somewhere that all seventh and eighth grade pupils must go to the county seat to write their final examinations. There were four of us from Lame Johnny. Mason Peterson, Peter Sieger, Evelyn Maxon and me. Poor little country kids. We were all afraid of the big city. The idea of a FINAL test was bad enough. But to have to write such a test in a strange big building-- oh no! Miss Carter assured us we all knew enough to pass. Then gave us added relief by offering to go along and just be there. We all passed."[2]

Programs, especially the Christmas program were an important part of the school year. There was no television, or radio, the slow mode of travel made it impossible to go to town for entertainment, so the

1. Quarterly uniform test and review questions, December, 1910.
2. Verda Arnold, Our yesterdays, p.136.

people in the community made their own. Some schools had programs to raise money to buy needed equipment. Children gained much from the experience of getting up in front of people to act out a playlet, speak a piece or perform in some other way. Because of the lack of pencils, and paper and books, memorization was an important part of education. Some people in their eighties can still quote dozens of poems which they learned while in elementary school.

Verda Arnold wrote of her school days, "Much of the fun and joy of a country school was program time. It was probably looked forward to with as much trepidation as joy. For some there was always a little stage fright, for others there was none. Edna Haaser was a master hand when it came to programs. These consisted of group singing, solos and dialogs (little plays). Edna played the organ and the older pupils stood close enough to read the words. We 'little kids' stood back and learned the words from them. A few days after being given our parts to learn, we used the 'opening exercise' period for practice sessions. For those who would be taking part in more than one rendition there was no warning until the first 'piece' was pretty much under control-- then we received the lines we must learn for the dialogue or extra 'piece'. During program time there was usually a feeling of togetherness-- a comradeliness that was missing on just regular days. Now the big boys didn't tease the younger children so much and the whole school seemed interested in how well you spoke your piece.[1]

1. Verda Arnold, Our yesterdays, p. 136.

Throughout each county the schools prepared for county spelling bees and declamation contests. Everyone, from first graders through eighth grade took part. Winners from each county went on to a state contest. But everyone was a winner because the practice involved to compete at the county level raised the ability of all to spell and to speak in front of a group.

Each school district within a county, while controlled by the local board, was directed and guided by the woman or man who was County Superintendent. The office was at the County Courthouse and the Superintendent's job was not an easy one in the large counties of western South Dakota. In the first place, it was an elective position so every two years he had to run for office during the election, had to go out and ask people in the county to vote for him, an expensive time-consuming, tiring chore in the days of travel by horseback or buggy, in the large counties in the West River area.

"The county superintendent's office was always a busy, busy place. There was always a rush on to get things done and meet the deadlines set for school reports and activities on the school calendar..... Summer began with the census reports from the clerks. Then came the ordering of textbooks and supplies. Next came the completing and filing of the annual reports from the school officers, which was followed by the stocking of textbooks and supplies. Then came the planning of the school calendar and the preparation of the annual school teachers' bulletin, which was the basic guide to be followed for the school term ahead, and mixed in with these regular duties, was always the problem

of placing good teachers in the schools, who meet the certification regulations adopted by the State Department of Public Instruction.

The beginning of school brought teachers' meetings, institutes, etc., with the accompanying rush by teachers for library books, textbooks, and supplies.... Each term brought its rally days with spelling contests, speech contests, track meets, art exhibits, music festivals, and the County YCL Convention, at which time State Spelling Contestants and State YCL Delegates were selected..... Eighth Grade Graduation was always a special day, a culminating activity for pupils, parents, teachers, and the County Superintendent.[1]

The Young Citizens League was an organization for children in school which promoted good citizenship, practice in the democratic process by teaching them to conduct business meetings, share the chores of the school and raise money to improve the school. Beside the YCL annual convention and the county convention, there was an annual YCL chorus day in each county.

Some schools far from a high school added the first years of high school subjects if they could find a qualified teacher. The Sorum common school district, in Sorum, a little community in Perkins county, had a rural four year high school and employed one or two teachers for the few students who otherwise would have had to leave home to board in some town where there was a high school.

Beatha Spring remembered that the ninth grade classes at a school in Custer county started at 8:30 and the other grades started at the regular time. Wages for the teachers who were able to teach the ninth

1. Central Meade County prairie schools, pp. 12-13.

grade was $80. per month while those who could teach only the regular eight grades was $55. If a district could afford it, it was better to keep the kids at home as long as they could.[1]

1. Beatha Spring, Our yesterdays, p. 448.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY


Aldrich, George I. and Forbes, Alexander. Progressive Course in Reading; First Book. American Book, 1899.

Baldwin, James. School Reading by Grades. American Book, 1897.

Bale, G. Justin, "Development of Territorial Education of the Black Hills of South Dakota, 1876-1890" (unpublished thesis, 1943).

Blodgett, Frances E., and Blodgett, Andrew B. The Blodgett Second Reader, Ginn, 1905.

Donnelly, F. F. A Primary History of the United States for Intermediate Classes. American Book, 1885.

Elk Mountain School District. Clerk's Record Book.

Frye, Alexis Everett. Frye's First Steps in Geography. Ginn, 1906.

The Golden Book of Favorite Songs. Hall & McCreary, 1915.

The Heath Readers by Grades; Book Seven. Heath, 1907.

Memoirs of South Dakota Retired Teachers. South Dakota Retired Teachers Association, 1977.

Monteith, James. Barnes's Complete Geography. American Book, 1896.

Our Yesterdays. Hermosa, S. D.: Eastern Custer County Historical Society, 1970.

Quarterly Uniform Test and Review Questions. Lincoln, Nebraska: University Publishing Company, 1910.

Redway, Jacques W. and Hinman, Russell. Natural School Geography. American Book, 1907.

School Stories in Central and Eastern Meade County, South Dakota, 1889 to Reorganization. Stoneville, S. D.: Stoneville Steadies Extension Club, 1969.

South Dakota State Planning Board. Elementary and Secondary Education in South Dakota. Pierre, S. D.: State of South Dakota, 1937.

Swinton's Fourth Reader. American Book, 1883.

# COUNTRY SCHOOLS AND THE AMERICANIZATION OF ETHNIC GROUPS

## COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY

Caroline Hatton

Booklet
p. 4
p. 7
p. 10-11
p 13

## COUNTRY SCHOOLS AND THE AMERICANIZATION OF ETHNIC GROUPS

The Sioux, the greatest of the Plains Indians who haughtily dominated the northern plains for nearly a century, resisted the white man's ways more vigorously than other tribes. Of the Sioux living only a hundred years ago, Hassrick wrote, "To characterize the Sioux as anything less than vainglorious would be inaccurate. Their arrogance was born of successful conquest....They could hardly help being aware of their great power. The Sioux were far more than aware; they were overbearing in their vanity." The Sioux were forced by sheer weight of numbers to submit to the white man's ways. Still conscious of their superior past it is no wonder they most bitterly resisted.[1]

When the economic basis of the Sioux culture, the buffalo, was destroyed, the Indians' manner of making a living was taken away, their relationship between themselves and their environment changed and the whites, an alien conquering culture, tried to force a new way of life upon them. Unlike the agrarian Pueblos, for example, traditional values of the Sioux bore no relation to this new way of life. The nomadic and warlike Sioux with their high values of physical bravery, generosity, individual autonomy, good advice and leisure could not follow their traditional ways when the white American culture was thrust upon them. When they tried to behave according to their heritage and

1. R.B. Hassrick, The Sioux; Life and Customs of a Warrior Society, p. 67.

tradition they were constantly frustrated and their normal behavior was considered wrong and ignorant by the white men. For example, the refusal of the Sioux to accept the white man's value of working from eight to five in exchange for something led to being called lazy. The Sioux value of individual autonomy and appreciation of leisure led to them being regarded as irresponsible.

Poor grammar

The management of Indian affairs was a federal responsibility. Various plans for land holding and allotments for the Indians failed to make them self-supporting ranchers. Over the next century their management failed to bring about hoped-for educational progress, although some federal boarding schools for Indian people were established very early.

Any noteworthy progress made during this period was contributed by the missionaries of several denominations. The four men who did the most in this respect in South Dakota were John P. Williamson, Presbyterian, 1860-1917; Rev. Thomas R. Riggs, Congregational, who worked with the Indians from 1872-1940; Bishop William Hobart Hare, Episcopalian, from 1873-1909; and Bishop Martin Marty, Catholic, 1873-1896. These four denominations conducted most of the ministry to the reservation Indians in South Dakota. In 1900 the government discontinued all help to the Indian mission schools and gradually large numbers of them closed. But the Catholics, especially, continued in spite of difficulties. By 1961, there were still three left: St. Francis on the Rosebud, Immaculate Conception at Stephan, and Holy Rosary at Pine Ridge.[1]

why?

1. South Dakota Historical Collections, XXXVI, pp. 205-444.

Because the United States government held the Indians as wards and supervised all internal and external relationships with them, missionaries, traders and all others were obliged to approach the Indians by negotiating with government agents, which had been sent to each reservation.

The first government schools were boarding schools, the idea being that the best way to teach the Indians the white culture was to get the children away from their parents and the old customs, ways, and values. White men sought out the Indian bands and told them they had to send their children to the white school. Their parents, honorable people, thought that if the Great White Chief in Washington said so they should do it. Sometimes their chidren were never allowed to come home until they had finished high school. The problem then was what was a student, having graduated from high school and knowing a trade, to do once he came back to the reservation? Over ninety five per cent of the young Sioux people did return from school to live with their home folks.[1] Very few opportunities were available for employment. The major occupation was raising livestock but most of the reservation land was sub-marginal ranch land.

> p.6.

There was no relationship between the government Indian schools and the public schools of South Dakota. In 1916, State Superintendent of Schools, Lugg, said in his biennial report, "While our schools are not yet what we wish them to be, we may congratulate ourselves on the fact that illiteracy among the whites is but seventy two hundreths

1. South Dakota Historical Collections, XVIII.

> EXACTLY AS planned----

4

of one per cent. The non-white population of the state is almost wholly Indian, and the illiterates among the Indians are still wards of the federal government, for whom our schools are not responsible."[1]

A 1913 law had required that Indian children be included in the census which put them under the compulsory attendance law. But in 1915, chapter 195 of the session laws of 1913 was repealed. This served to excuse Indian children from compulsory attendance in white schools.[2] Thus Indian parents living off the reservation did not have to send their children to school and teachers, school board members and administrators could discourage Indian children from coming to school and not be breaking my laws.

As the Indians sold their land on the reservation to white ranchers, and whites moved onto the reservation, some public school districts were established there. They had very meager tax support but there were some small one-room schools started. Indian children living in the vicinity attended also, sometimes. In Kyle, a small, small community on the Pine Ridge reservation there was a one-room day school run by the federal government for Indian children on the east side of the village and a poor, run-down one-room school run by the local school district for white children on the west side of the village. The retired B.I.A. teacher who told this, when asked if they ever had contact with each other and how many white children went to school there, shrugged and said, "Oh, we had nothing to do

1. Biennial Report of State Superintendent of Schools, 1916, p. 8.
2. South Dakota Educator, April, 1915, p. 6.

with them. I don't really know anything about the number of students."

The dust bowl and depression of the thirties intensified the problems of Indian life and Indian education. In 1936 it was suggested in Washington that boarding schools be eliminated and day schools be started. It was obvious that the boarding school concept was not working. In 1935, Kraushaar wrote that the Indian schools would have a hard time meeting state accreditation standards. At that time about twenty per cent of the children in Pine Ridge and eighteen per cent on Rosebud were not in school.[1]

The boarding schools continued to be used but day schools were started. Eventually there were three types of federal schools on the Indian reservations: day schools, reservation boarding schools and non-reservation boarding schools.

The day schools tried to prepare their students for the kind of life they would live on the reservation. They carried on the raising of cattle, horses, goats, and poultry; gardening; farming; and haying. They had summer projects something like today's 4-H projects for the boys. They had a shop at the school where they taught them simple carpentry, and repair of farm machinery.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs hired a teacher and a cook for each day school. Most of the teachers were men and if they were married their wife served as cook. If the teacher were a woman, another woman would be hired to help as cook. The cook's job was more than

1. South Dakota Historical Collection, XVIII.

to get the noon meals. It was up to her to teach the girls how to prepare food, how to wash the dishes, how to clean the kitchen, how to keep themselves clean, how to behave at table, how to sew simple articles of clothing. While the teacher had to be a graduate of a teachers college and qualified to teach, the cook did not, although she was certainly teaching also.

Teachers came from all over the United States to teach in the Indian schools. It was depression times and the pay was pretty good. None of them had any training about the Indian culture, or any knowledge about the problems people faced when they were made to change from one culture to another. Most of them had no understanding of the people they came to teach, and I suspect, some of them did not care. I talked with one man and his wife who had spent thirty years teaching on reservations and they had nothing to tell me. As the man said, "It was a job."

Each day school consisted of a schoolhouse in a small, loosely knit community of houses usually built of logs, up to one-fourth to one-half mile from each other. Besides the school there was a house for the teacher and his family, a building which served as kitchen, dining room and washroom, and sometimes a shop for the boys to work in. There was usually a garden somewhere in the vicinity, but not close to the schoolhouse because it would be in a valley or good garden spot. The teacher worked all year round with a short vacation some time during the summer. He was teacher, janitor, carpenter, projects leader, gardener. His wife was cook, teacher, and canner of all harvested produce for use during the winter as well as mother and wife to her family and husband.

Most Indian children started school speaking only Lakota. Harold Shunk said that when he started teaching at Cherry Creek day school, Cheyenne River reservation, in 1936, only two children of the forty or fifty in that community spoke English. Those two had moved back to the community and were part white. He said he taught his first graders English and reading by using pictures of the things they knew, printing the name of the thing under the picture and teaching them to read those words. He used things they understood: deer, chipmunk, skunk, crow, raccoon, tree, at first and then led them to other words. To his great surprise it worked and they learned. Lakota children had no understandings or experiences which helped them in their lessons. The contents of the textbooks too often were alien and unrelated to anything in their lives.

Maintaining regular school attendance was a definite problem. Mr. Shunk said that when he first came to that school, only twenty one children showed up for school but there were over forty on the school census. He talked to a father of children who were always in school and asked his help. He was to go around and talk to the families who were not sending their children and tell them that they were supposed to send them. The man was successful and eventually there were fifty-two children coming to school. There were some disgruntled parents who said, "Who does he think he is, coming around telling us that our kids should be in school as if he were the teacher. He is no better than the rest of us." But the children came to school.

There were several cultural reasons for the lack of attendance. The nomadic spirit was slow in dying out. Families frequently went to visit relatives, or if the whim took them, went to some other locality to take part in some kind of traditional ceremony or celebration. The Dakota value of individual autonomy affected how they raised their children. They believed that the self is one with the universe, yet completely autonomous. As an example, children were assigned tasks but never supervised in order to develop their autonomy. Coercion and persuasion were unacceptable to them since no person could decide for another. It is evident that the exercise of this traditional value would cause much frustration for an Indian child in a school run by white values. Indian parents had the tendency because of their heritage to support the child in his desire to stay away from school if he wished, because he wasn't getting along with the teacher or he was having trouble with his schoolwork.[1] Poor roads caused poor attendance also during the winter because of drifting snow and in the spring because of impassable mud.

The Indian parents thought that the white ways of raising children was abnormal. The whites let their babies cry and spanked their children. School discipline is successful if it is an extension of the parents' control. The white-run day schools were by no means an extension of the Indian parents' beliefs. This conflict between cultures tends to make children withdrawn, confused and defensive. Be-

1. D. Lee, Freedom and culture

sides, they had not been taught to be competitive, but to be cooperative, because in their culture, cooperation on the hunt, and in their daily lives was totally necessary.

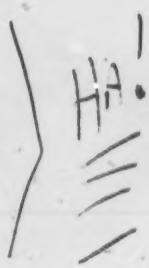
In the beginning the government furnished the Indian children attending boarding school with clothing. When day schools were started all pupils in day schools were also provided with clothing during the school year. Teachers began to see that such dependency was not good, and breaking a forty year tradition, they began to provide clothing on an only-for-service-rendered basis. Some schools had the children do so many hours of chores to earn jackets, overshoes and other clothes. Others had the parents work to earn clothing for their children. They did such work as repairing fence, filling the ice house or working in the school garden.

The Indians found the transition from the old way of life to the white man's way confusing and difficult. Breaking up kinship groups and bonds and the established way of nomadic life to which the Indian had been accustomed caused uncertainty and confusion. It was many years before the B. I. A. finally gave up the idea of trying to completely eliminate the native culture of the Indian people and attempting to replace it with a veneer of white man's culture.

One Indian Commissioner who had an anthropologist's respect for the Indian culture was Colyer. He strove to let the Indians keep the customs and ways of their heritage. Harold Shunk told about receiving word from the lady who was the head of education on

Cheyenne River reservation at that time that he was to let the children "dance Indian" at school. He was part Indian himself, but he felt that doing that was neither practical nor desirable. One of the problems at the school was that some children were kept up late too many nights dancing and would either not show up for school the next day or would be too tired to do well when they did come. He did not take the lady's recommendation, but avoided saying no because she was, after all, his superior, and it was during the depression and he had a family and did need his job. Finally there was a showdown, and the lady told him to let the kids dance Indian or else.

One morning he had them push the desks back and dance Indian. By the next day three Indian mothers came to see him, and he told them why he had let the children dance. One of them, more assertive than the others, said she would like to talk with that lady next time she came to visit school. When the supervisor came on her next visit, he told her the Indian mother wanted to see her and he pointed out her house, quite a way from the school. There she was told in quite definite terms that Indian children in that community were to go to school to learn from books and she would please leave the dancing up to their parents.




There were twenty one of these day schools on Pine Ridge reservation. Officially they were designated by number, but among the local people some of them were called by the following names: Red Shirt Table day school, Wakpamini day school, Wounded Knee day school,

Oglalla day school, Lone Man day school, Porcupine day school, Manderson day school, Wamblee day school, Allen day school, Potato Creek day school, Kyle day school, and Slim Buttes day school. On Cheyenne River reservation there were ten one-room schools: Cherry Creek, Red Scaffold, Bridger, Iron Lightning, Thunder Butte, Four Bear, Green Grass, Bear Creek, Moreau River, White Horse. On Rosebud there were nine day schools: Oakcreek, He Dog, Horse Creek, Norris, Little Crow, Corn Creek, Spring Creek, Milks Camp, and Soldier Creek.

Up to World War II, horses and wagons were the common family transportation. During the war the picture began to change. Young Indian men went to the armed forces and when these veterans returned, many left the reservations. Those that stayed were unhappy and trapped there by circumstance. Many of the young people had bee[illegible]-enced by their war time experiences to adopt more of the wh[illegible]-ture. Second hand cars began to appear which made getting t[illegible]ear-by towns possible, but sadly, made liquor more available.

In 1957, the Spindlers distinguished four main classes of Indians recognized by their level of acculturation. The first level includes those who have changed very little from the time of their ancestors and who exercise all the old time virtues. At the other extreme is that of the completely acculturated Indian who will not be found on the reservation because when a person reaches that stage he is assimilated into the white culture. Between these two groups are young people who have doubts about the traditional culture but

continue to affirm it because they feel unhappy and thwarted by the white culture. The transitional type is agressive and unpredictable, shifting from one stance to another or becoming passively withdrawn.[1] Because of this, the Sioux communities were and still are places of apathy and poverty. The modern Sioux Indian is characterized as passive, apathetic and hostilely dependent. (?)

It has been the observation of educators of Sioux Indians, that, apart from an initial native shyness, Sioux youngsters are perfectly normal in their emotional responses when they first come to school. It takes about three years for them to become acclimated to this new situation, so that with dramatic suddeness, at about the fourth grade, Indian students achieve and exceed standarized norms. This lasts until the seventh grade. Then begins a decline in acnievement which continues to the twelfth grade and is accompanied by a sixty per cent dropout rate. By the twelfth grade they are as far as two years behind in achievement. It is theorized that the impact of the Sioux-white value conflict occurring primarily during the period of adolescence creates in the Sioux student personality disturbances which hinder full performance.[2]

Hum

By 1970 most of the one-room schools on the reservation were gone. Reorganization took place there too, big new buildings were built, and pupils are bussed to them.

Every six weeks, and at the end of the school year, the teachers at the day schools sent reports to the B. I. A. agency on the res-

1. G. Spindler & L. Spindler ,"American Indian Personality Types and their Sociocultural roots," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, May, 1957, pp. 147-157.
2. John Bryde, The Indian Student, p. 31.

ervation. So far these old reports have not been located. Each school had a kind of school board set up to advise the teacher. The records for t.ese meetings have not been found.

The other ethnic groups in western South Dakota were the immigrants who came late in the 1800's. One group consisted of people from almost every European country who came to work in the Homestake gold mine at Lead. They included Finns, Belgians, French, Bohemians, Irish, Greeks, Chinese, Italian, and Polish. Once the land was opened to homesteaders in the early 1900's many of them moved down from the Black Hills onto the prairie to take a homestead and own land of their own, probably something they never dreamed back in their homeland that they would ever be able to do.

The Finnish people congregated in one area north of Buffalo. They had the tradition of the sauna and were sociable with one another and it meant a great deal to be together. Other nationalities from Lead did not seem to stay together, but one family or two would move into an area among English speaking people.

The country schools were the places where they sent their children to be Americanized, and from their children, they learned the American ways, ~~too~~. Leo Seppala, who is Finnish, told how his parents wanted their thirteen children to speak Finnish at home so as not to forget their heritage but sent them to school to learn English. School was very important to them, he said, because it meant a better life for their children. He thought that was true of all the Finnish

families in the area where he grew up. Others have said that the new immigrants they knew felt the same way.

The other group of immigrants were the Russian-Germans. Some of them settled north of Wall where the land is very flat, and raised wheat. They tended to keep their own language; the schools were taught in German, their church services were conducted in German. Even in the 1930's many of them still spoke German at home. Family was very important to them and they had big families. Their children went to one-room schools but quit when they finished the eighth grade and did not come to town to board and to attend high school as ranchers' children did. World War II changed all that. They, like the young Sioux Indians, had to go out in the big world, and it changed everything when they came back.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bryde, John F. The Indian Student; A Study of Scholastic Failure and Personality Conflict. Vermillion, S. D.: Dakota Press, 1970.

Hassrick, R. B. The Sioux; Life and Customs of a Warrior Society. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964.

Kraushaar, R. W., et al. "Studies in South Dakota Education," South Dakota Historical Collection, Volume XVIII.

Lee, D. Freedom and Culture. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1962.

Shunk, Harold. Personal interview.

Spindler, G. and Spindler, L. "American Indian Personality Types and Their Sociocultural Roots." The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Volume CII, May, 1957.

South Dakota Educator. South Dakota Education Association, April, 1915.

South Dakota State Superintendent of Schools. Biennial Report, 1916.

Thorpe, Cleata B. "Education in South Dakota; Its First Hundred Years, 1861-1961," South Dakota Historical Collection, Volume XXXVI, pp. 205-444.

COUNTRY SCHOOLS TODAY

Country School Legacy

Caroline Hatton

Booklet

p1
p2
p3
p4
p6 use outdoor toilets

COUNTRY SCHOOLS TODAY

WOW!

In western South Dakota there are one hundred eight small rural schools still in business. Most are one-room schools but twenty eight have two teachers, ten have three teachers and one has four teachers. The schools with more than one teacher are in tiny communities of less than one hundred people, usually twenty five to fifty miles from the nearest larger town.

Distance is still a big problem in much of western South Dakota. The children who attend rural schools travel long distances to get to that one-room building where they spend the day with other children whose homes are just as remote from community life as their own. Many travel from ten to twenty to twenty five miles one way to get to the one-teacher, one-room school where they attend. Imagine the nearest school being twenty five miles away and when you get there, there are six other kids. In one such school there are two kindergartners, two first-graders, one second-grader, one third-grader and one fourth-grader.

There will likely be school in that building for at least eight more years. Then perhaps, it will be closed, or moved because all the children of the ranchers in that vicinity will be gone. But by that time a younger age group who live in the area will have

grown up, married, and started families, but probably not on the same ranches, so the center of population will shift. The school house might be moved, an old, empty one revived, or the school left in the same place and some families travel farther than others.

There are no small common school districts left since reorganization took place in the sixties. Every small rural school is part of a school district which often covers hundreds of square miles, and includes the schools in a town from twenty-five to fifty miles away. There is sometimes the feeling among rural teachers in far outlying schools that they are forgotten and neglected by their administrators. Their problems are probably not appreciated by some harried elementary principal who has lots of discipline and teacher problems. He probably thinks that the rural teacher in that rural school has a pretty peaceful time.

And she does, generally. Several teachers commanted that their school children are like a family. The teacher knows each one personally and knows the weaknesses of each. There are few behavior problems and discipline is a very simple and unimportant issue. "Education is, in fact, tutoring, with them [the children] getting individual attention." So says Mary Lighthill, who teaches thirteen children at Littleburg Elementary School.

Students can work on their own, get help from the teacher in a one-to-one situation and have the opportunity to participate in all activities.

Cheryl Carstensen, the teacher at Alfalfa Valley School, said, "I feel that younger and older students learn from each other, not only subject matter but how to give and take. They learn how to work with and cooperate with others, despite vast differences."

Ranch families live and work together and few of the fathers go off to a daily job of which their family has no part. The ranch is the family job, not just the father's responsibility, and that makes for a closeness of family ties. Because of this, perhaps, there is a more personal contact between teachers and parents. As Cheryl Carstensen ssid, "There is closer contact with both the parents of students in a rural school."

Once a child is through the eighth grade the problem of high school looms large. The parents have several choices. If they can afford it they rent or buy a house in the nearest town which has a high school and for a few years the mother and children spend the week-days in town and the weekends on the ranch with Dad. As the children grow older and more responsible they might be left in town by themselves during the week.

The problem is solved easier if there is an aunt or a grandmother with whom the high school student can stay. Many travel farther away from home than the nearest high school in order to stay with a relative.

No matter where a student stays, during the winter months, there will be weeks at a time when he will either not be able to get home, or does not dare go because the roads might blow shut and he

won't get back to school for a month.

Sending a child forty-five or fifty miles away for months at a time to take on the demanding business of adjusting to high school with no close support from his family must be a traumatic experience for both parents and children. One lady spoke of how hard it was to send her only son forty-five miles to Newell. She said, "I thought I'd die of lonesomeness at first, but I didn't."

A rural teacher is basically her own boss. She is free to run her daily program to suit the ages and temperments of her pupils and to suit herself. Ila May Croff said the parents of her pupils were the nicest, most-cooperative people she had ever worked with. She has an old fashioned Christmas program every year which involves the people in the community, and she teaches plenty of "basics" in her daily work.

Paula Eisenbraun, who teaches at Big Foot School in the Badlands, said an advantage to teaching in such a place was that "nature is at your front door which is most inspiring and excellent for experiments."

As one teacher expressed it, "It is a very peaceful atmosphere with very few noisy distractions and plenty of fresh, clean air. There is lots of wide open space for quite a variety of activities at recess and in classroom work. Mostly the advantage comes from the people. Everyone is so friendly and parents are always willing to help."[1]

1. Elaine Williams, Fairpoint School.

There are lots of wide open spaces around the Fairpoint School. It is thirty miles west to Newell. The nearest town to the north is Bison, fifty-five miles away. To the east the Missouri River is one hundred miles away with no towns in between. To the south New Underwood is forty-five miles away. No wonder the parents of the five children in that school are friendly and willing to help. Certainly in such an isolated place, people are very important to each other, and the school becomes very important to the people in the area.

That teacher lived at that school. But many rural teachers opt to drive long distances to work. Most of them live at home and drive to work, some four or five miles, ten, fifteen, twenty, others twenty-five or thirty miles. None expressed the belief that having to drive so far every day was a disadvantage of teaching a rural school.

There were disadvantages mentioned. Some teachers who lived in the small communities where they teach mentioned the long distance, fifty miles for example, to town as a disadvantage. That makes it difficult to get materials and, more personally, difficult to find entertainment such as theaters, restaurants, and nightclubs.

Most-mentioned disadvantages that teachers feel affect their students are lack of team sports, skilled music and art teachers, the lack of science resources and equipment and the lack of libraries. One lady feels her students suffer from not getting a chance to mix and adjust to larger groups.[1] Then when they go to town to high

1. Reva Maas, Maitland School.

school it is a little harder to adjust.

Many teachers of rural schools have had experience teaching in town schools. One thing they miss is the interaction with other teachers which they had in town.

School houses now are all wired for electricity, thanks to the Rural Electrification Associations. Many still have outdoor toilets though; even if they have inside bathrooms they have kept the outside ones and, as one teacher told me, use them in nice weather to conserve water. Some who still use outside toilets have cistern water in the schoolhouse for drinking and washing. Few teachers spoke of the primitive plumbing or lack of plumbing as a disadvantage.

I found no more coal or wood stoves, but plenty of gas furnaces and space heaters, some oil. A few schoolhouses are heated by electricity.

Many of the teachers say they could think of nothing their school lacked. Two wished the entry was bigger. Other wishful thinking conjured up a music room, more playground equipment, a television set, more plug-ins, a movie camera. About one third of the teachers wished they had a library at school or access to a library on a regular basis.

Gayla Fredrickson who teaches at Twilight school in Meade County, said "South Dakota still has need of rural schools and will continue to need them as long as we remain an agricultural rural state...

I began rural school in Butte County in 1957. I attended the Stetter school which was closed in 1971. In the twenty-three years since I started I feel like the rural schools should have made more progress. That school was almost exactly like this one twenty-three years later."

DEC 1981
ERIC PRESS
RECEIVED

COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY
WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atlas of South Dakota School Districts. South Dakota Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Pierre, S.D.: State of South Dakota, 1979.

Bale, G. Justin, "Studies in the Development of Territorial Education of the Black Hills of South Dakota with Special Reference to Pennington County, 1876-1890." Unpublished M. A. thesis, 1943.

Beadle, W. H. H., "Public Education." South Dakota Historical Collection, Vol. III. Pierre, S. D.: South Dakota Historical Society, 1913.

Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of South Dakota. South Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Lawrence K. Fox, Superintendent. Pierre, S. D.: State of South Dakota, 1935.

Bleskested, Inga Theodora, "Territorial Schools in Pennington County, 1876-1890." Unpublished M. A. thesis, n.d.

Brown, Mabel Stoll, "The Prairie Child." South Dakota Historical Collection, Vol. XXXIX. Pierre, S. D.: South Dakota Historical Society, 1978.

Bruner, Charles W., "A Study of the History of the Elementary Schools of the Lutheran Church in South Dakota, 1906-1967." Unpublished M. A. thesis, Northern State College, 1968.

Bryde, John F. The Indian Students, a Study of Scholastic Failure and Personality Conflict. Vermillion, S. D.: University of South Dakota Press, 1966.

Colborn, Joseph E., "A History of School Finance in South Dakota." South Dakota Historical Collection, Vol. XIII. Pierre, S. D.: South Dakota Historical Society, 1923.

Course of Study for Elementary Grades. South Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Harold S. Freeman, Superintendent. Pierre, S. D.: State of South Dakota, 1954.

Course of Study for the Seventh and Eighth Grades of the Elementary Schools of South Dakota. South Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Fred L. Shaw, Superintendent. Pierre, S. D.: J. Fred Olander Company, 1922.

Coursey, O. W. A Complete Biographical Sketch of General William Henry Harrison Beadle. Mitchell, S. D.: The Educator Supply Company, 1913.

Cowboys and Sodbusters; History of Butte County. Vale, S. D.: Old Friends of Vale, n.d.

Dick, Everett. The Sod-House Frontier. Lincoln, Nebr.: Johnson Publishing Company, 1954.

Dimmette, Celia Puhr. Take Me Home. Francistown, H. H.: Marshall Jones Company, 1979.

Dystra, Harry; Jerde, Walter; and Wollman, Harris; editors. Permanent School Fund in South Dakota and the Beadle Club. Aberdeen, S. D.: North Plains Press, 1976.

Early History of South Dakota Counties. Statewide Education Service, Report F69. Vermillion, S. D.: University of South Dakota, 1969.

Eastern Pennington County Memories. Wall, S. D.: American Legion Auxilliary, 1965.

Eastman, Elaine Goodale. Sister to the Sioux. Lincoln, Nebr.: University Press, 1978.

Echoes Through the Valleys. Elk Creek Pioneer Association, 1968.

"Education." Doane Robinson's Encyclopedia of South Dakota. Pierre, S. D.: By the Author, 1925.

"Education in South Dakota." South Dakota Historical Collection, Vol. XVIII. Pierre, S. D.: South Dakota Historical Society, 1936.

"Educational Drive." South Dakota Historical Collection, Vol. X. Pierre, S. D.: South Dakota Historical Society, 1920.

Fall River County Pioneer Histories. Hot Springs, S. D.: Fall River County Historical Society, 1976.

Fielder, Margaret, editor. McIntosh-Watauga-Morristown, South Dakota, 1909-1958. 1958.

Fifth Census of the State of South Dakota, Taken in the Year, 1935. Table XVI, Extent of Education of All Persons Eighteen Years and Over, by Counties, pp. 137-138. South Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Lawrence K. Fox, Superintendent. Pierre, S. D.: State of South Dakota, 1935.

Hall, Bert S. Roundup Years, Old Muddy to the Black Hills. Pierre, S. D.: Reminder, 1954.

Hansen, Myrle George, "A History of Harding County, South Dakota to 1925." South Dakota Historical Collection. Vol. XXI. Pierre, S. D.: South Dakota Historical Society, 1942.

Hellman, Ethel L. Blizzards of South Dakota. Pierre, S. D.: State Publishing Company, 1970.

Hellman, Ethel L. Winter of Disaster, 1953. Pierre, S. D.: State Publishing Company, 1953.

The Heritage of Society's Elders. South Dakota Retired Citizens, 1976.

Hunkins, Ralph V. S. D. E. A., the First Seventy-Five Years, 1884-1959. Pierre, S. D.: South Dakota Education Association, 1959.

Hunkins, Ralph V., and Lindsey, John C. South Dakota, Its Past, Present and Future. New York: Macmillan, 1932.

Jennewein, Leonard, and Boorman, Jan, editors. Dakota Panorama. Pierre, S. D.: Dakota Territory Centennial Commission, 1961.

Johnson, Clifton. Old Time Schools and Schoolbooks. New York: P. Smith, 1935.

Johnson, Willis E. South Dakota, A Republic of Friends. Pierre, S. D.: The Capitol Supply Co., 1912.

Karolevitz, Robert F. Challenge: The South Dakota Story. Sioux Falls, S. D.: Brevet Press, 1975.

Koller, Joe, "Minnesela Days." South Dakota Historical Collection, Vol. XXIV. Pierre, S. D.: South Dakota Historical Society, 1949.

Korsgaard, Ross P., "A History of Rapid City, South Dakota during Territorial Days." South Dakota Historical Collection, Vol. XXXVII. Pierre, S. D.: South Dakota Historical Society, 1976.

Lang, Mrs. Wayne F., editor. Faith Country, 1910-1960. Faith, S. D.: Executive Committee of the 50th Anniversary Golden Jubilee of Faith, 1960.

Lenski, Lois, Little Sioux Girl. New York: Lippincott, 1958.

Lenski, Lois, Prairie School. New York: Lippincott, 1951.

Long, Minnie, editor. Golden Jubilee, 1910-1960, Timber Lake. Timber S. D.: Timber Lake Community Club, 1960.

Lowe, Barrett. Twenty Million Acres. Mitchell, S. D.: Education Supply Co., 1937.

Ludeman, W. W., "History of Public Education." South Dakota Historical Collection, Vol. XIII. Pierre, S. D.: South Dakota Historical Society, 1931.

Mato Paha, Land of the Pioneers. Meade County, S. D.: Alkali Community Club, 1969.

Memoirs of South Dakota Retired Teachers. South Dakota Retired Teachers Association, 1976.

Miller, Farrel R. One Hundred Years in Dakota. T.R.M. Enterprises, 1978.

Our Yesterdays. Hermosa, S. D.: Eastern Custer County Historical Society, 1967-1970.

Pioneer Footprints. Butte County History, n.d.

Powers, W. H., "A History of the Development of Education in Dakota Territory, 1862-1889." Unpublished M.A. thesis, State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, 1890.

Prairie Schools, 1889-1969. Stoneville, S. D.: Stoneville Steadies Extension Club, 1974.

Proving Up: Jones County History. Murdo, S. D.: Book and Thimble Club, 1969.

Ransom, Frank L. Civil Government of the United States and South Dakota. Mitchell, S. D.: Educator Supply Co., 1913.

Reese, M. Lisle. South Dakota: a Guide to the State. New York: Hastings House, 1952.

Robinson, Doane. Brief History of South Dakota. New York: American, 1912.

Schell, Herbert. Dakota Territory during the 1860's. Vermillion, S. D.: University of South Dakota Press, 1954.

Schell, Herbert. History of South Dakota. Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1961.

Schell, Herbert. South Dakota: Its Beginnings and Growth. New York: American, 1942.

School Laws of the State of South Dakota, 1953. Sioux Falls, S. D.: Midwest Beach, 1953.

School Stories in Central and Eastern Meade County, South Dakota, 1889 to Reorganization. Stoneville, S. D.: Stoneville Steadies Extension Club, 1969.

Sloane, Eric. The Little Red Schoolhouse. Doubleday, 1972.

Smith, George B., and Young, Clark M. History of Government of South Dakota. New York: American, 1913.

South Dakota Legislative Research Council. Report of the Committee on Education. Pierre, S. D.: State of South Dakota, 1937.

South Dakota Planning Board. Elementary and Secondary Education in South Dakota. Pierre, S. D.: State of South Dakota, 1937.

Spindler, Will H. Centennial Prairie. Gordon, Nebr.: Gordon Journal Publishing Co., 1965.

Sundstrom, Jessie Y., editor. Custer County History to 1976. Custer, S. D.: Custer County Historical Society, 1977.

Sunshine and Sagebrush; a Comprehensive History of the Oral-Smithwick, South Dakota Communities. Oral, S. D.: Northeast Fall River County Historical Society, 1976.

The Sunshine State, South Dakota Song Book; Let's Sing. Mitchell, S. D.: Educator Supply Co., n.d.

Tallent, Annie D. The Black Hills or Lost Hunting Ground of the Dakotas, 1874-1876. Centennial Edition. Freeman, S. D.: Pine Hills Press, 1974.

Taylor, Gilbert B. Glimpses into Edgemont's Past. Lusk, Wyo: Lusk Printing, 1961.

Taylor, Katherine Sprague. A Shattered Dream. Lusk, Wyo: Lusk Herald, 1967.

Tidball, Rose, editor. Taming the Plains. Keldron, S. D.: By the Author, 1976.

Tripp County Fiftieth Anniversary. Winner, S. D.: Sodak Printers and Winner Chamber of Commerce, 1959.

Van Orman, Hattie, and Johnson, Pearl Bieber, compilers. Harding School, 1931-1953, Corson County. Timber Lake, S. D.: By the Authors, 1981.

Westerhoff, John H. McGuffey and His Reader. Nashville: Abingdon, 1978.

Whitley, Fred, "History of Custer City." South Dakota Historical Collections, Vol. XXXVII. Pierre, S. D.: South Dakota Historical Society, 1974.

Williamson, William. William Williamson. Rapid City, S. D.: By the Author, 1964.

Woodward, Harry R., "Public High School Dormitories in Western States." Unpublished M.A. thesis, Stanford University, 1929.

Old newspapers are excellent sources for school news, fresh at the time, but historical now. The following old newspapers from western South Dakota have been microfilmed by the South Dakota Historical Society.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bennett County | | |
| LaCreek | Bennett County Booster | 1911-1912 |
| Martin | Bennett County Booster | 1953-present |
| Martin | Bennett County News | 1942-1944 |
| Martin | Messenger | 1922-1952 |
| Butte County | | |
| Newell | Reclamation News | 1915-1917 |
| Newell | Valley Irrigator | 1911-present |
| Nisland | Butte County Press | 1915-1939 |
| Belle Fourche | Bee | 1900-present |
| Belle Fourche | Northwest Post | 1903-1935 |
| Belle Fourche | Daily Belle Fourche Post | 1936-present |
| Belle Fourche | Times | 1896-1899 |
| Castle Rock | Press & Moreau News | 1917-1928 |
| Vale | Call to Action | 1913-1917 |
| Vale | Valley Irrigator | 1907-1911 |
| Corson County | | |
| Grand Valley | Herald | 1908-1929 |
| McIntosh | Corson County News | 1939-present |
| McLaughlin | Messenger | 1936-present |
| McLaughlin | Mirror | 1916-1918 |
| Morristown | World | 1915-present |
| Custer County | | |
| Buffalo Gap | Republican | 1890-1907 |
| Custer | Custer County Chronicle | 1880-1889, 1904-present |
| Custer | Weekly News | 1960-1974 |
| Fairburn | Custer County Press | 1925-1927 |
| Hermosa | Pilot | 1888-1891 |
| Dewey County | | |
| Eagle Butte | News | 1939-present |
| Isabel | Dakotan | 1954-present |
| Isabel | News | 1911-1948 |
| Lantry | Leader | 1911-1912 |
| Lantry | Ledger | 1911-1912 |
| Timber Lake | Topic | 1915-present |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Fall River County** | | |
| Ardmore | American | 1915-1927 |
| Edgemont | Express | 1904-1928 |
| Edgemont | Herald-Tribune | 1952-present |
| Edgemont | Tribune | 1923-1967 |
| Hot Springs | Daily Star | 1890-1897 |
| Hot Springs | Times | 1926-1928 |
| Hot Springs | Times Herald | 1906-1909 |
| Hot Springs | Weekly Star | 1887-present |
| Oelrichs | Advocate | 1915-1939 |
| **Haakon County** | | |
| Leslie | Pioneer | 1904-1905 |
| Marietta | Eagle | 1907-1910 |
| Midland | Mail | 1912-1954 |
| Midland | Western Star | 1904-1911 |
| Philip | Bad River News | 1906-1912 |
| Philip | Pioneer | 1917-1921 |
| Philip | Pioneer Review | 1921-present |
| Philip | Weekly Review | 1907-1921 |
| Powell | Wakoma Leader | 1907-1912 |
| Wellsburg | Eagle | 1907-1910 |
| **Harding County** | | |
| Buffalo | Times-Herald | 1923-present |
| Buffalo | Harding County Era | 1914-1916 |
| Camp Crook | Range Gazette | 1907-1942 |
| Covert | Advance | 1928-1942 |
| **Jackson County** | | |
| Belvidere | Jackson County Times | 1947-1951 |
| Interior | Index | 1920-1928 |
| Kadoka | Press | 1908-present |
| **Jones County** | | |
| Murdo | Coyote | 1904-present |
| Murdo | Pioneer | 1904-1911 |
| Okaton | White River Journal | 1906-1919 |
| Westover | Wave | 1904-1905 |
| **Lawrence County** | | |
| Deadwood | Black Hills Daily Times | 1877-1897 |
| Deadwood | Black Hills Mining Review | 1903-1907 |
| Deadwood | Black Hills Pioneer | 1876-1891 |
| Deadwood | Daily Champion | 1877-1891 |
| Deadwood | Daily Pioneer-Times | 1897-present |
| Deadwood | Evening Independent | 1897-1898 |
| Deadwood | Equality | 1899-1900 |
| Deadwood | Independent | 1887-1897 |
| Deadwood | Lantern | 1905-1909 |
| Deadwood | Telegram | 1908-1927 |
| Lead | Black Hills Weekly | 1927-1974 |
| Lead | Daily Call | 1894-present |
| Lead | Register | 1904-1910 |
| Spearfish | Daily Bulletin | 1889-1891 |
| Spearfish | Dakota Register | 1881-1906 |
| Spearfish | Enterprise | 1910-1916 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Spearfish | Queen City Mail | 1889-present |
| Spearfish | Weekly Register | 1887-1893 |
| Terry | News-Record | 1903-1910 |
| **Meade County** | | |
| Edson | Press | 1911-1912 |
| Faith | The Faith | 1911-1912 |
| Faith | Independent | 1936-present |
| Sturgis | Advertiser | 1887-1891 |
| Sturgis | Black Hills Press | 1896-present |
| Sturgis | Record | 1883-1946 |
| Sturgis | Tribune | 1946-present |
| White Owl | Oracle | 1915-1930 |
| **Pennington County** | | |
| Hill City | Harney Peak Mining News | 1904-1926 |
| Hill City | News | 1926-1951 |
| Hill City | Prevailer | 1970-present |
| Keystone | Recorder | 1904-1909 |
| New Underwood | Times | 1923-1943 |
| New Underwood | Press | 1953-1955 |
| Owanka | Bee | 1908-1926 |
| Quinn | Courant | 1922-1925 |
| Quinn | Courier | 1952-1954 |
| Quinn | Record | 1951-1967 |
| Quinn | Times | 1936-1943 |
| Rapid City | Advocate | 1939-1943 |
| Rapid City | Black Hills Journal | 1878-1952 |
| Rapid City | Gate City Guide | 1906-1968 |
| Rapid City | Guide | 1968-present |
| Rapid City | Journal | 1883-present |
| Rapid City | Black Hills Union | 1895-1911 |
| Rapid City | The Commoner | 1936-1937 |
| Rochford | Miner | 1880-1881 |
| Wall | Pennington County Courant | 1915-present |
| Wasta | Commoner | 1934-1938 |
| Wasta | Gazette | 1911-1934 |
| Wasta | World | 1935-1939 |
| **Perkins County** | | |
| Ada | Advocate | 1908-1912 |
| Bison | Courier | 1915-present |
| Grand River | Press | 1908-1910 |
| Lemmon | Leader | 1929-present |
| Lemmon | Tribune | 1921-1970 |
| Meadow | Grand Valley Herald | 1908-1929 |
| **Shannon County** | | |
| Pine Ridge | Oglala Light | 1905-1920 |
| Pine Ridge | Shannon County News | 1903-1931, 1964-1967 |
| **Stanley County** | | |
| Davenport | Cheyenne Valley News | 1911-1912 |
| Fort Pierre | Fairplay | 1903-1913 |
| Fort Pierre | Signal | 1880-1883 |
| Fort Pierre | Times | 1915--present |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Hayes | Booster | 1929-1931 |
| Todd County | | |
| Mission | Todd County Tribune | 1921-present |
| Rosebud | Sioux Herald (Eyapaha) | 1963-1971 |
| Ziebach County | | |
| Dupree | Leader | 1910-1924 |
| Dupree | West River Progress | 1936-1971 |
| Dupree | Ziebach County News | 1916-1951 |
| Red Elm | Record | 1917-1927 |

This bibliography compiled by Caroline Hatton for Country School Legacy.

SCHOOL RECORDS AVAILABLE AT COUNTY AUDITORS' OFFICES IN WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA

| County | School census | End of year reports | Six weeks teacher's reports | County Supt. record book | Teacher application and standing | Financial records | Board of Education minutes | Record of 7th and 8th graduation | School district boundaries | Officers' reports |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bennett | | 1921-1970 | 1921-1970 | (All records are at the Bennett Co. high school) | | | | | | |
| Butte | | | | | 1916-1970 | | | | | |
| Corson | | 1918-1971 | | 1920-1971 | | | | | | Have |
| Custer | 1887-1974 | 1894-reorg. | | 1891-1970 | 1919-1970 | some | | | | Have |
| Dewey | | 1914-1966 | 1914-1968 | 1918-1968 | | | | | | |
| Fall River | 1886-1970 | 1903-1970 | 1903-1970 | | 1909-1962 | | | | | |
| Haakon | (Did not answer) | | | | | | | | | |
| Harding | (Did not answer) | | | | | | | | | |
| Jackson | (Did not search) | | | | | | | | | |
| Jones | | | | | 1916-1971 | | 1965-1971 | 1930-1962 | 1921-1968 | |
| Lawrence | (Did not answer) | | | | | | | | | |
| Meade | (Files inactive; did not search) | | | | | | | | | |
| Mellette | | Have | | Have | Have | | | | | |
| Pennington | | 1881-1970 | 1881-1970 | | Have | | | Have | | 1882-1970 |
| Perkins | | 1914-1969 | | | | | | | | |
| Stanley | (All records are at the Stanley County High School, Fort Pierre, S. D.) | | | | | | | | | |
| Ziebach | | 1920-1970 | 1920-1970 | | 1910-1945 | | | | | 1911-1954 |

10